



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 07485107 6

WALTER GRAEME

or

A HOME AMONG THE HILLS;

AND OTHER POEMS

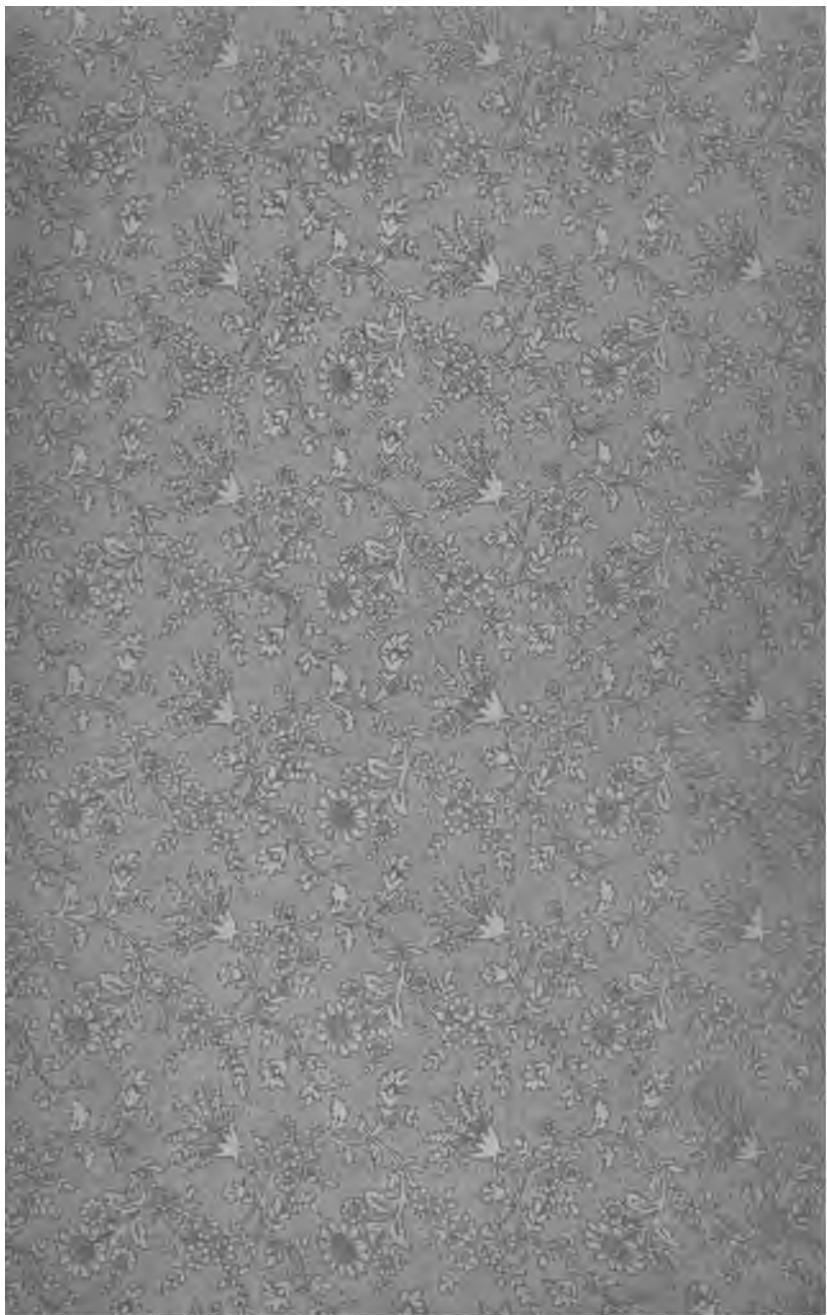
HODDER & STOUGHTON

THOMAS FERGUSON

Ø

—

;



WALTER GRÆME, AND OTHER POEMS.

(Fergusson) T
NCM

~~507~~

WALTER GRÆME

OR

A HOME AMONG THE HILLS

And Other Poems

BY

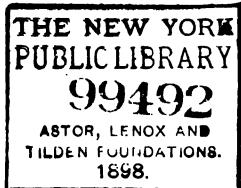
THOMAS FERGUSSON

J. AND R. PARLANE, PAISLEY

JOHN MENZIES AND CO., EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW.

HOULSTON AND SONS, LONDON.

1898



THIS Volume my heart dedicates to my departed Wife.
The long Poem, and many of the shorter pieces, were
written more than thirty years ago, when our wedded life
was young, and when she was my guide and my inspirer.
They were, however, laid aside at the time, and became in
a sense forgotten ; but her unexpected death has brought
me many sad and solitary hours, and my thoughts have
wandered back to those memorials of a vanished Past. I
publish them now as her Memorial Wreath, and, such as it
is, I lay it with a reverent hand upon her grave—earth's
holiest spot to me.

DUMBARTON, February, 1898.

C O N T E N T S.

	<i>Page</i>
WALTER GRÆME ; OR, A HOME AMONG THE HILLS ...	11
MISCELLANEOUS POEMS :—	
Continuity	109
Nature	110
To a Moorland Flower	111
Sabbath Morning at Luss	113
Ailsa Craig	115
Nick o' the Balloch	116
To-morrow	117
Sonnets : Crossraguel Abbey	118
On Revisiting my Native Place	122
The Toon o' Minnibole	126
Culzean Shore Revisited	129
The Burns Centenary Banquets, 1859	130
Dear Love of Mine	134
Joy	136
Pride	138
The Maiden's Sorrow	139
Alice and Robin	140
Life	146
De Profundis	147
My Past	149
The Raindrop	153

	<i>Page</i>
MISCELLANEOUS POEMS—<i>continued</i>	
Two Questions	158
On the Death of a Young Friend	159
On the Sudden Death of a Friend	160
Death-bed Breathings	161
Bigotry	164
Self-Remonstrance	165
Hope	166
Spring	167
Summer	168
Autumn	169
Winter	171
Night	172
Holiday	173
The Fisherman's Wife	175
Hymn—Believer to Jesus	177
,, Jesus to Believer	178
The Suffering Saviour	179
Bethany	183
Sorrow	185
Prayer	187
Heaven	188
To my Wife in Heaven	190

WALTER GRAEME.

WALTER GRÆME ;

OR,

A HOME AMONG THE HILLS.

No tale have I to tell of Troy divine,
Or hero-deeds of earth's old chivalry ;
I but attempt some record of a life
Which I have spent among the nameless poor.
Nor do I deem that in the eye of Truth
I soil the garments of fair Poesy
When I withdraw her from heroic themes
Where Nobleness and Prowess mix their blaze,
Or Grandeur flaunteth in her palaces,
And lead her by an unreluctant hand
To humble dwellings and to quiet shades
Where runs the current of man's common life.
For in the lonely shieling of the hills,
And in the rustic hamlet, and in streets
And darkened lanes of cities, I have found
Most of the virtues that enoble man :—
Firm perseverance, a large common-sense,

A heedfulness of truth, a fine perception
Of the invisible ligature that binds
The common earth to the majestic heavens,
A calm, rude majesty of word and gait,
The patriot's ardour, Mercy's tender glow,
A loving reverence for the ties of home,
The pleasant laughter of low-lived Content.
And honoured faces, even as now I write,
Bright with the gleam of virtues like to these,
Come from the dead Past and look up at me ;
And in the task to which I set myself
With a pure pleasure and a reverent heart,
I shall again meet with them ; and I trust
To brighten all my story with the worth
Which I have met with in obscure abodes,
In simple lives of men who lived and bloomed
Their peaceful hours as fragrantly away
As the dead roses of our pleasant vale.

I.

If there be aught I might have coveted
Of earthly lineage, it is that I
Had drawn my derivation from those Sires
Whose names were honoured round our winter hearth ;
Brave souls, the product of rough stormy times,
Who never truckled to the might of man,

Or grudged their blood for their old Covenant.
Those lowly heroes of my native land,
Lowly no longer, with their names for aye
Emblazoned in the heraldry of heaven,
And treasured in their countrymen's deep hearts ;
Who dared their unknown names against a king's,
And rolled out banners, regal as his own,
And took for Arbiter the Lord of Hosts
To see if Scotland's liberty should die ;
Who filled our mountain-clefts and lonely moors
With rugged, touching eloquence of tongues
Which ere to-morrow might be stiff in death ;
Men who, in earnestness to bring about
God's great Millennium, reversed God's plan,
And turned, in fervour of undoubting faith,
Their innocent ploughshares into hurtful swords,
And peaceful pruning-hooks to deadly spears,
And, pausing from their bloody work, looked up,
Nor vainly, for a blessing.

From such stock,
Were a choice given me, or did wish avail,
I might have coveted to draw my blood.
But I know nothing of my ancestry ;
I cannot scour the dead sea of the Past
'Neath which my ancestors lie whelmed for ever,
No echo of them to be heard on earth.
I have no chart to steer by in that sea,

Nor ancient family-tree, down which to flit
With eager finger and with kindling eye,
Making dumb ages find a tongue for me.
I never heard my great-grandfather's name,
Yet whether from a coldness in the blood,
Plebeian meanness, or a false contempt,
I little envy the heraldic scroll,
Finding sufficient of content in this,
To owe my being to the mighty God.
And who can tell me if there may not be
As much concern among the hosts of heaven
Whene'er an infant, fresh from God's own hand,
Is cradled in an unregarded cot,
As when the heir to some august domain
Opens his eyes amid magnificence.
Nor can I see, although I scrutinize
Each nook and cranny of ancestral pride,
Owning all nobleness I meet with there,
How any spirit need be held base-born
Whose name is written in the Book of Life.

I never looked upon my father's face,
Never was dandled on a father's knee,
For ere I had attained the shore of life,
Where I should glad him with my little smile,
Pale Death had sent him, sorrowful, away ;
And but a few moons after my sad birth,
In sudden sequence of misfortune's blows,

My mother, too, laid down her weary head,
Fleeing from persecution of disease
To the calm shelter of the peaceful dead.
Ah, mother, never known, thy life to me
(As now I think of it in distant days)
Seems sorrowful and dreamlike ; and my heart
Oft sadly musing, pities thee, and here
Pays this late tribute to thy memory :

I see thee, mother, wearily tread o'er
The path of sorrow, which thou long hast trod ;
I see thee leave me, while thou weepest sore,
Unto the keeping of the orphan's God.

My mother, unto whom this task was given,
Sadly to forfeit all a mother's joy,
I shall not know thee when we meet in heaven ;
My mother, wilt thou know thine orphan boy ?

And as thou lookedst down with loving eye
And saw me smiling at a stranger's breast,
Did not some envy reach thee in the sky,
Ruffling the depths of thine eternal rest ?

And as love paints thee 'mong the gleaming throng
That Faith holds up to Piety's fond gaze,
Dost thou, in pauses of the angels' song,
Recall to memory those olden days ?

I would I could remember thy fair face
As it hung o'er me with endearing smile,
Although mine eye distressfully might trace
New lines of sorrow on thy brow the while.

Yet why thus linger with a vain regret ?
Our love is interrupted, but not ceased ;
Death that hath severed shall unite us yet,
When my ripe spirit is from dust released.

I never knew, and yet I never missed
The gentle nurture of a mother's hand ;
For in the reach of a large charity
That finds sad opportunity in woe,
A peasant-mother took me to her breast
In trustfulness and hope, and set me down
Among the merry prattlers by her side,
To bud and blossom through the various year.
My foster-mother, fair and merciful,
I see thee in the brightness of those days
When thou wert splendid in thy russet gown ;
I see thee lead us where the hedgerow hides
Its feet 'mong wild-flowers in the dewy grass,
The while we, jealous, battle for thy smile ;
I see thee in thy nook with busy fingers
Mending the mischiefs which our clothes have met ;
I hear thee read us, with a reverent air,
The wondrous message which thy God has dropped

Down from the merciful and pitying heavens ;
I hear thee teach our infant lips to pray
In childhood's simple words, each infant lisp
Prelude to hallelujahs in the heavens ;
I see thee leave us with thy mother-smile,
As we lay down at night our weary heads
Among sweet visions where the angels stray ;
I see these things, and see them through a tear.
Bright things that may not die ! O good to know,
All pure things are immortal. Ye old years,
Ye come again with blessings for my heart,
Years garlanded with flowers of memory !
How those old homely and penurious years
Bring me yet messages across the past,
Fraught with the wisdom which the lowly learn.
How many trials poverty must face
Which wealth puts from it with a careless shove ;
Yet half man's wisdom are his daily trials,
Daily laid weak and vanquished at his feet.
How bright the record of a lowly life,
Spent in the path of unambitious duty,
As seeing Him who is invisible.
How many deeds that beautifully sit
Upon our poor humanity, have come,
Blest silent arrows of the bow of love,
From quivers of the lowly—gentle deeds
That spring like blossoms out of kindly natures,
Those lilies in the valley of our life,

Which the Almighty Hand shall one day gather
Into a beauteous and surpassing garland
Fragrant and fresh for ever in the heavens.
To be born humbly and be humbly-hearted
Is a perennial blessing ; not removed
In feeling from the many of the earth,
No pride to pamper and to spoil the heart,
No flattery to distort the truth of things,
Nothing but duty in its simplest guise,
With no corrupted or corrupting glare,
Bright with the light enkindled from above.
And so I have esteemed it wise to think
The fairest flower is virtue in the shade,
Virtue unconscious of admiring eye,
Shedding the odour of good deeds around,
And ripening in beauty for the sky.

And now I come to thee, my foster-father,
And name thee with a kindly reverence.
I see thee and thy mate, with mutual arm,
Breast the great billows of the surge of life ;
I see thee toiling in thy patch of earth,
Wrenching subsistence from its niggard hand ;
And all thy toil is that thy household troop
May spread their table with that frugal plenty
That well suffices to keep health afoot
And lend to gratitude an upward wing.
I see us, gleesome, on the lengthy nights

Of gleaming winter, which with kindly pinch
Drives us all in-doors, while the heaped-up fire
Officiates at its ministry of warmth,
Play round thy knees, while all our little home
Rings with the ceaseless tumult of our din.
And cause have I to reverence thy name
Who taught'st my wayward and rebellious heart
To listen to the undersong of peace
That ever breaketh on the reverent ear
Amid the pure serenities of home ;
And taught'st me, likewise, by the silent tongue
Of a repineless life, that calm Content,
Like the house-sparrow, often builds in thatch.
Thus I revere thee with a kindly love ;
And yet the waving of the churchyard grass,
That sings thy requiem, makes sad distinction
Betwixt thy memory and that of those
Who travelled with me, side by side, those years,
And still breathe with me earth's accustomed air.
Thy face, long pallid, casts some shade to me
On all thy life ; yet my hushed spirit walks
In that shade's twilight with divinelier step,
And sees bright visions that are only seen
Beneath the duskiness of Death's dark wing.
But though I darken with prophetic gloom
Even now thy history, long years must pass
Ere that the current of my story brings
That piteous morning when we laid thee down

To wait in silence and in peacefulness
The glad appearing of new heavens and earth.

I have a brother whom I dearly love,
Two sisters who are dearer still to me ;
(I count them as my brethren, though there runs
In our bloods' current no warm kindred drop)
And when I joined their brotherhood, the boy
Had seen eight summers redden on the hills,
The pale-faced Margaret may have counted six,
And little May had seen her third year out.
The youngest was an infant at the breast,
And she and I grew strong on the same milk.
If it be more than fable that we ever
Imbibe the spirit of the breast we suck,
I and my sister, as we quiet lay,
Embosomed at the fount of that dear breast,
Were drinking draughts of that delicious lore
That makes perpetual summer in the heart ;
The lore of mercy and of kindness
That well their gracious tide up from a heart
Touched finely in the springs—that ransacks earth
For means to mitigate the smart of woe,
Nor circumscribes its ministry by earth,
But with a prayer knocks at the gate of heaven.

Our home lay in the bosom of the hills,
Which screened it so, that winter in his spite

But feebly shook his terrors over it,
And no wind but the privileged south-west
With burly visitation swooped upon it.
Down the defile up which the warm south blows,
The eye could catch a sudden glimpse of sea ;
And it was pleasure to us little ones,
Upon the rustic seat by the house-side,
Embowered with roses, on the summer eves
To sit and watch the passing of stray ships,
And wonder, when the lonely night came down,
If the poor sailors saddened on the sea.
And on wild winter days, from our snug window,
To see the boats skip, playthings to the waves,
Was fascination terrible, and touched
Our spirits with a pang of sympathy.
A meadow spread before our cottage door
Its breadth of daisies ; and not distant far
There ran a streamlet, busy at its song;
Brawling in winter, but in summer's heat
Feeling its feeble way among the stones
That roughened its small channel ; and I thought
We had the bravest garden in the world,
Gay with blue hyacinths, coy mignonette
That bribes the breeze to run and tell she's there,
Before the eye can mark her—violets dim
With sad thoughts working in their dreamy eyes ;
Bright roses, blushing fragrantly till doomed
Red leaf by leaf to disarray themselves ;

And other flowers, less famous, but as sweet.
Even in your beauty and your pride, ye flowers,
You strike me, when I see you, with a touch,
Some touch of desolation ; for you ever
Image earth's beauty and earth's fleetingness.
And I remember, in my early years,
When standing shivering in the flowerless fields,
I sometimes wondered, in my childish way,
How summer so offended, as to need
A scourge of storms to drive her from the earth
In coldness, and in nakedness, and tears.

Here in this lowly nest we five reposèd,
Waiting till time and circumstance should bring
Their changeful accidents, which bring in turn
The broadened thought that mellows and matures.
Here, in this little nest, we five reposèd,
While that our wings were growing for the flight
That yet awaits us, past the moon and stars.
Poor feeble wings for so adventurous flight !
Ah ! sad to think, as every day can show,
When the heart mutinies against its good,
How slow corrosion of base circumstance
Eats through the spirit's wing, that nevermore
Man shall attempt the steep flight into heaven,
But rest in low contentment ; he who should
Acquaint his forehead with the gleam of stars,
And in the light of Heaven's high wisdom make

The mysteries past death familiar things
In the calm converse of his daily thoughts.

Here, in this little nest, reposed we five.
God keep the nestlings from the cruel swoop
Of the despoiler's wing. Poor innocents !
As now I think of us, how I could wish
The year all summer, and our lives all song,
Earth beautiful as a delicious dream,
Nought round us harsher than the balmy air,
And nothing sadder than the sunny beam.

Fond but vain wish ! soon to be beaten back
By the rude blasts of sorrow hastening on
To chill our household into misery.
For now, when busy memory goes forth
Upon the sea of my sequestered life,
And, like a diver, brings my dead Past up
And quickens it again with wondrous art
And spreads it on my page, her furthest footing
Is 'mid the dismal dreariness of woe :
A scene of horrors, grouped confusedly,
And scarcely real in that mist of years.
My mother, wringing her distracted hands,
Then in a moment tossing them on high
Half in a dismal hopefulness of prayer,
Half in wild recklessness of heart that thinks
It never, never can be comforted ;

Her eye wild gleaming with a frenzied fire
Which not the torrent of thick tears can quench ;
Her loose hair flying o'er disordered shoulders
Or hiding decently her bared breast ;
Her cry, the cry of the heart's misery,
Not bodily pain ; the restlessness of foot
That searches for some cranny where despair
May creep in darkness, and in darkness weep
That saddest burden of her woes away ;
The deadly pallor of a face not dead :
This vision, weirdlike, glimmers on my eye
When memory juts to her extremest verge.
The vision this ; and this the circumstance :
My baby sister, prattling innocent,
A little toddler of some three years old,
Who but so recently had hung with me
Upon our mother's breast, had disappeared,
And after weary and foreboding search
Her mother, horror-struck, beheld her lie
Within a treacherous eddy of the brook
That drowned her darling, and went singing on.
Belike the little stumbling feet had gone
To pluck some glittering flower upon the bank,
And tumbled there from the green earth to heaven.
Ah, hapless mother with the weary breast,
And eye that loveth not the pleasant sun
Nor any touch of human happiness,
Time, gentle healer, Time, blest sanctifier,

Shall yet bestir him at his gracious task
Of lighting with a sunny hope the gloom
And desolation of thy stricken heart.
And so it was—months buried 'neath their moons
Sorrow's wild wail, too passionate to last,
And gave instead meek-eyed serenity,
The scarce-repining of the gentle sigh,
The quiet breathing of calm pensiveness.
And thus it is, as most of us have seen,
When sorrow darkens any human home
She ever seeks with a benignant hand
To scatter seeds of hope that yet may bloom
Within the fissures of the broken heart ;
For suffering brings to us this gentle boon,
That when she wrings she purifies the heart,
And when with one hand she takes earth away
Brings with the other the pure joys of heaven.

We seldom spake of this calamity
Around our peaceful hearth ; but yet for years
It cast some shade of sadness on our home ;
And often imaging my mother's grief
In my still musings, I have tried to frame
The touching story to a simple rhyme.

THE MOTHER TO HER LOST CHILD.

Mary, thy little life is o'er,
Thou sleepest in the sod ;

No human tongue can tell how sore
I grudged thee to thy God.

I sought for thee, while many a tear
Would from my dim eyes start ;
I sought for thee, while many a fear
Smote at my weary heart.

And did I, though I, weary, sought,
Not hear thee when thou criedst ?
And thine own mother, did she not
Bend o'er thee when thou diedst ?

And when I found the resting-place
Where thou didst breathless lie,
How earnestly the quiet face
Looked at the quiet sky !

Ah me ! within that lonesome brook
So near thy home to die ;
To lay thee down and quiet look
Up at the quiet sky.

Sad, sad and long my parting look
That sorrow-darkened day,
When those that loved thee came and took
Thee from mine eyes away.

I set a white rose at thy head,
Pale lilies at thy feet,
And when their sweetness they outspread
I think 'tis thou art sweet.

The birds are hopping o'er thy head,
I see them every day,
And thou, now in thy lowly bed,
Wert innocent as they.

Thou sleepest calmly, little thing,
My darling and my pride,
Waiting till friendly death shall bring
Thy mother to thy side.

And when the angel's trumpet blast
Shall ope our slumbering eyes,
We'll rise together at the last,
Together to the skies ;

To that bright land, where to the Lord
We'll raise our gladsome hymn,
To which earth's griefs shall lend a chord
Untouched by Seraphim ;

That land, where glories ever new
Light up the saints' abode,
And rivers of delight flow through
The Paradise of God.

II.

We never were at school, yet never thought
Ourselves unschooled ; for on the winter nights,
Under our father's able generalship,
We laid brisk siege to every single letter
Of the long alphabet, until at length
They all capitulated at our feet,
And were our serviceable slaves for ever.
But our chief monitor was Benjie Brown.
Old Benjie in his better days had been
A steward in the house of some grand squire,
In virtue of which honourable service
He was our high revered authority
In point of manners ; but his great strength lay,
As he himself knew, in a solemn bow.
Old Benjamin, quite rich enough he thought,
Had now returned unto his youthful home
To mellow his old bones among the hills,
And threw himself, with even a headlong zeal,
Into the matter of our bringing up,
And with a patience that provokes my praise
He made us masters of his store of learning.
But yet not learning in its proper sense,
But rather the refinement of our manners
He made his chief vocation, and thus he
Took as the high aim of his moral being
To teach us “the dispositions,” as he called them.

Ah ! how he toiled in that ungrateful soil,
And kept on sowing with a simple faith
That a rich crop of glowing courtesies
Would cover him with glory : simple faith !
So hopeless that 'twas almost chivalrous.
The manners make the gentleman, he said, and hence
His faith in "the dispositions" he so loved.
To accept gracefully, courteously decline,
A proffered service, was a work of art
That in good Benjie's eyes approached a virtue.
Benjie, the kind, the pleasant, the polite !
What though thy bright, magnificent idea
Would never be translated into fact,
Thy work is not all lost ; and though thou giv'st
A far-off worship unto gentle blood,
Thou art no recreant to the proud traditions
That have ennobled men but lowly born ;
And saw'st that it was better far to be
An honoured man among thy lowly peers,
Than to be nothing in the skirts of rank ;
And therefore gleefully thou hiedst thee home
To see the flowers thou carriedst in thy heart
Through many years, bloom sweetly on the lea,
And feel again the soft winds of thy youth
Blow the old fragrance through among the hills ;
And in the hour of trial and distress
Thy neighbour-mountaineers have found in thee
Blest sympathy and hope, and often has

Thy shadow darkened on their doors for good.
A humble artist, limning on the canvas
Of thy calm, lowly life, the pleasant outline
Which heaven looks down upon with loving eye.
Thou brave old Benjie, 'tis no fault of thine
The graces will not grow among the hills ;
Live on, and teach thy heart the noble wisdom
And gentle solace of a kindly life :
And when at last Death comes among the hills
Looking for Benjamin, he there shall find
(So let us hope in love and charity)
A heart not unaccoutred for the long
And wondrous journey that awaits him then.

And so our education sped apace ;
As thus we all turned over the first leaves
Of the strange Book of Knowledge, which begins
In vague half-nothings of our childish days,
And then impels adrift maturer thought,
Unto whose inquisition and research
The heavens will grant no respite evermore ;
That thought which soon outsoars all earthly things
And wanders groping through eternity,
And brings from that far land, when it alights
Again upon the earth, where it had birth,
A saddened feeling for man's sordid world
Where want and woe, and necessary cares
So jostle even eternity aside.

Yet this soul-sadness vivifies the life,
As sleep that prostrates renovates the frame.

Another monitor we had besides ;
A cottar, whom, even in my childish days,
I had a reverence for, as one of those
Whose virtues had attraction for a child.
A genial-thinking man, who deemed a frown
Had no more warrant to a human face
Than the still sunlight of benevolence.
Yet not that everlastingness of smile,
That simper, ready for whate'er you say,
Which I have seen make faces hideous,
And which provokes my spleen more than worse things.
A general noble-heartedness of soul
Lay on the rugged features of this man ;
Features o'er which you saw that sorrow oft
Had travelled, with her keen spear in her hand,
Spear too familiar with the naked heart.
A man whose not uncultured heart was filled
With a keen sense of what is beautiful
In glowing nature, and as keen a sense
Of gratefulness to the Almighty God
Who had environed him with breezy hills,
And with those golden promises of bliss
That lit his lowly life up with the splendours
That have their being in eternity.
Yet though with these things his deep heart was full,

Reserved, like to his countrymen, he spake
But seldom of those high and awful hopes
That flash a glory on the common world.
But as I cast my eye along the track
Of years now perished, but not perished all,
The mortal years have borne immortal fruit.
I well can see that to that man I owe
Some of my reverence for virtue's name ;
And much of my now heartfelt sympathy
With feelings of the too-unvalued poor.
For in maturer and more thoughtful years
I learned with him, not only calm content
That my life's station was a humble one,
But to be thankful for my lowly birth,
And that a peasant's was my childhood's tongue ;
For thus I have been taught (would I could brand
The dear conviction and the simple truth
Into all spirits, as by words of fire)
The essential nobleness there is in man
(Man, whether high or humble) that needs not
The poor earth's dignities to make him great.
I learned to think that in the lowly cot
May flourish all the virtues of the hall ;
I learned to think that the great stately hall
Can scarce know all the virtues of the cot :
The silent battle even for daily bread,
Which teaches daily fortitude and faith ;
That keen, peculiar luxury of giving

When sharing of our crust to others' want,
Is self-denial in its purest sense ;
That humbleness of spirit likeliest
To thrive and flourish in obscurity,
And which is Christianity's chief grace.
These lowly virtues, with their kindred ones
So native to the soil of poverty,
Taught me to set a value on the poor,
But never taught me to despise the rich.
Was not the Son of the Eternal poor ?
And did He not tread through Judea's land
A homeless peasant in a peasant's garb ?
Hail ! hoddin grey, for ever honourable !
A God once wore it on our own old earth.
'Tis God that justifies, who shall condemn it ?
See, then, your nobleness, ye sons of toil :
And though proud worldlings cannot see this truth,
Oh ! see it for yourselves, and that you hold
The station hallowed by the Son of God.
Lift up your heads, sons of the Mighty One :
The selfsame everlasting gates that oped
To let the King of Glory in of old
Shall open yet for you, ye lowly ones ;
And in that ever-blooming land where God
Has built for Faith her many-mansioned home,
Ye shall hold converse with archangels yet.
Sons of the Highest, ye poor sons of toil,
If ye can see beyond the veil of flesh.

Thus sketch I my ideal of this man,
Known by the unheroic name of Wood ;
Old Andrew Wood, my quiet type of hero,
For whom, and such as whom, the sun performs
The daily miracle of new-born light ;
For whom, and such as whom, our harvest fields
Smile as they crown themselves with sheaves of plenty ;
Heroes whose trophies are the peaceful deeds
Which shed sweet happiness round dismal hearths ;
Heroes whose armour has been forged on high ;
Who conquer on their knees ; for whom there waits
A blissful welcome to heaven's hero-land ;
For not a spirit that inhabits there
But somehow was heroic on the earth.

My brother Oswald was but slow at learning ;
A tricksome urchin, who far more enjoyed
A raid among the hills, or fun and frolic
With lads and lasses of the countryside,
Than to sit down demurely to his book,
While winds were scampering thro' the mountain-gorge,
Or fish were gleaming in the crystal stream,
Or game were sporting in the fields around.
No dullard was he, though at books but dull ;
But when his curiosity was set
Rightly on foot it lent his industry
A willing hand, so that no youthful slave
E'er worked with more will in the fairy mine

Of Cinderella and the wondrous slipper ;
Or cruel Bluebeard ; or the two small Jacks
Who made their wits a match for the fierce giants.
At lorn like this he was a greedy learner,
And when by chance he could possess a book
Fraught with such treasures, he would disappear
For half a day among the mountain wilds,
Or couched securely in the leafy screen
Of some umbrageous tree, and there in peace
Would sip the nectar of those honied tales.
A free, frank, fearless boy, with merry laugh
That shot good-humour upon every face
That came within his gay and harmless glee ;
Stout and dark-haired, with ruddy cheeks of health,
An eye keen as a goshawk's, but from which
A dash of merriment oft twinkled out
Whene'er old Benjie, with his sober face,
Grew eloquent on the proprieties.

But, as compensating for this small slight,
My sister Margaret by the hour would sit
And listen to Ben's stories of great dames
Bedizened past belief with gold and gems,
And beautiful as sunshine when it twines,
With witchery and grace, its warming beams
Among the petals of a new-born rose ;
And as she listened, from her eye would shoot
Gleams of that dazzling, but ill-omened fire

That has no warrant to blaze anywhere,
But least should sparkle in a poor man's home.
Ah Margaret, Margaret, vanity is oft
Vice in the bud ! and when I saw thee gaze
Too earnestly, and with a joyous flush,
Upon thine image in the flattering pool,
I feared lest evil days might come to thee
Before the story of thy life was done.
Yet our whole household loved her, for her face
Was sweet to look on, and her pleasant voice
Sent its soft music thrilling to the heart ;
And although vanity might be a guest
Too favoured in her breast, I never thought
That she despised as mean her lowly lot,
Or ever meant that any act of hers
Should strike lone Desolation through the home
Where she was nurtured with a pure intent,
With true ambition that outsoared the sky.

And now I turn unto my little May,
The thought of whom is sunshine to the heart,
Which, when it touches even the mists of sorrow,
Tints them with beauty, ere they roll away.
Within the circle of her deep blue eye
Peace sat in calm contentment—on her tongue
Hung the soft graces of pure love and truth,
And in her common breath she seemed to catch
The air serene that bloweth from the heavens.

She loved pure Nature in her every mood :
When the first breath of Spring bids the pale snowdrop
Rise from its sleep to lead the flowery van
And be a prophecy of genial hours ;
When leafy Summer, thronged with singing birds,
And Autumn, with a rustling garland on,
Sit in the sun, or lurk in shady dells ;
Or when lone Winter sends his piercing howl
Through the bare forest, teaching the old boughs
A mournful music. Joy it was to her,
In Nature's gentler mood, to meet the morn
In its pure radiance, tripping from the east
To wake the green earth with a kiss of love ;
For dear to her the innocence of morn,
Arrayed in dewy finery of gems
Ere yet the sober and paternal sun
Bids it lay by such grandeur ; and she loved
The gorgeous sunset crimsoning the west ;
Sweet hour of sunset, that complacent hour
When Meditation, with the dew, falls down
Upon the heart of man, making the morrow
The brighter for the soberness of eve.
And with a musing eye she loved to watch
The pale moon stealing through the quiet heavens
On messages of mercy to us all ;
And to her finely balanced mind no rose
That bloomed in beauty by the dusty road
But was a pure ambassador for God ;

No flower but used whatever simple tongue
Of eloquence it had, on virtue's side,
To keep men pure, and make them happier.
And all this tenderness, and earnest joy
In varied Nature's ever beauteous face,
Was the outgoing of an inward love
And gracefulness of soul, that threw a charm
On her domestic motions ; and her life
Was as some sunny thing on which to look .
Was hopefulness, and pleasure, and sweet peace.
So grew she up, among the lonely hills,
A solace and a blessing ; and as each
Of the fair seasons passed, it dealt to her
A growing charm of beauty, till her name
Unto my ear became a melody,
And hid itself, all fragrant, in my heart.

III.

Years travel slowly ; but they passed, and plucked
My childhood from me—happy years of childhood,
Embosomed in the vale of Memory,
Bright with the radiance of unsetting suns,
And fresh with breezes that delighted leap
Through the fair scenery of that young land.
O beauteous thought ! that, howe'er sorrow dog
Our later footsteps and declining years,

Heaven has ordained it that we all begin
Our awful journey to the unknown land
With childhood's ready smile, and careless mirth
Of our frank opening youth, when the fair earth
Lies all around us with her store of wonders,
Among whose flowers no canker-worm appears,
Nor hint of sadness to perplex our joy.

And so my childhood has blown past, like some
Calm, lingering cloudlet 'cross untroubled skies,
Until I am a lad of seventeen years,
Suddenly wakened from the pleasant dream
Of half-unconscious youth, and shown instead
A glimpse of a strange world, where I should go,
Far from my home and quiet of the hills,
To join the eager and the bustling throng
Who in great cities seek for golden sands
In life's cold current, doomed, as it might seem,
"To live laborious days" and sleepless nights
Chasing the phantom that enchanteth the world.
O ever perilous search, in which poor man,
Unconscious or else heedless, squanders oft
The awful gift of immortality.

Now came the day when I must say good-bye
To all I knew of tender in the world,
And learn what Time had for me in its keeping.
How all unlike to other days was that !

It was mid-winter with keen frosty air.
How dismal looked the agèd apple-trees
In the hoar garden ! and the berry bushes,
Stunted and bare, seemed such to fancy's eye
As Summer ne'er could wheedle into fruit.
The streamlet turned his song into a dirge ;
The cheery redbreast piping in despite
Of pinching winter ; the great hills around,
Where I had taught my youth to meditate,
And from whose slopes I oft, delighted, watched
The great sun set in splendour ; quiet smoke
Ascending slowly from the scattered cots ;
The thousand things, that at all other times
Were unto me but little, started then
Into a strange distinctness as my eye—
My wet eye—measured them. Benjie came o'er
To give me his fond blessing and last hint
Concerning “the disretions,” which I now
Should put in practice on a higher field.
And Andrew Wood, the night before I left,
Came o'er to see me, with his pleasant face.
We had much sober talk, and good advice
He gave to me in plenty ; and I try
Here to re-gather somewhat of his strain.
He told me I was now a voyager
Upon a mightier sea ; and if my God
Had fashioned so my fate that I should make
A voyage long of threescore years and ten

To the blest shores of immortality,
He warned me that I never cease to fear
For my frail bark on life's tempestuous sea,
With every wave a sleepless enemy ;
He bade me keep pure Virtue in my sight,
“For Virtue,” said he, “Virtue is the star,
That polar star, by which the mariner
Steers o'er Life's treacherous and troubled sea
To his calm haven in eternity,
That troubled sea where dangers lurk as thick
As shells and seaweed on the tawny shore.
And train thy powers, now in their eager prime,
To steadfast labour and to lofty thought
O'er life and life's strange teaching, knowing this,
Each crown in heaven was laboured for on earth.
And ever keep with thee the love of nature,
Which will speak peace unto thy heart when grieved
With paltry fret, or treachery of men.
The meek-eyed flowers, let gentle thoughts of them
Intrude at all times in thy willing mind,
And when a wrong is done thee, round it throw
The healing fragrance of the joyous air ;
And when as now the great and rounded moon
Rolls through the heavens in splendour and in joy,
See thou forget not reverently to gaze
At the majestic wonder. Wisely heed
The life thou livest ; not from fear of death,
But from heart-reverence of Truth and Virtue.

If riches come to thee, then use them well
And thankfully ; if not, fret not thy heart,
Though thou be poor for ever ; though thy friends
Be destitute and needy as thyself,
And though thy portion, after all is done,
'Be but a green grave and forgetfulness.'"
So ran the old man on, with pleasant words
That smote like sunshine through the dusky room ;
And when I parted from him on the moor,
The keen winds whistling round, I stood and watched
The homely figure fading in the gloom,
And blest the dear heart tutored into wisdom
Among the bleak wilds of his native hills :
And although lowly, and his name scarce known
Save by his rustic compeers, I yet felt
That in the wide grasp of his searching thought
He was no common man, and that his life
Was something great shone on by something greater ;
For he was visioned with an eye to see
A present God, although invisible
And only known in symbol on the earth.

The parting with a mother whom we love,
With a kind father, with the household band
Whom we have prattled with through all our years—
This is a trying though a common thing,
And this distressful hour had struck for me.
My mother kissed me with a silent tear,

A tear that is a prayer, a burning tear
That sayeth nothing, and yet sayeth all.
I kissed my sisters, and ran, weeping, off.
The boat that was to waft me o'er the sea
Appeared in the blue distance like a bird
That swept the waters in its smoky flight;
And as we hastened onward to the port
My father counselled me with earnest words :
As that I should be chary of companions ;
That all at home were sure I never would
Rob them of their proud hope to see the boy
Who had been reared with them an upright man ;
That perseverance I should make my friend,
And Truth and Honesty my bosom friends.
And now I see the big tear in his eye
As he besought me, in his Scottish tongue,
“To mind the God wha made me, and hae aye
A bawbee hoarded for the faitherless.”
By which I knew well that he meant I should
Be kind and generous whene'er I might,
Remembering former days, and how that I
Had sheltered been when I was fatherless.

At length, upon the noisy, bustling pier,
My father, silent, grasped my hand in his ;
Last touch of home that I should take with me
Into a world I knew not. Well I knew
Some dismal aching at his heart would lie

As he trudged homewards ; and that round the fire
Which burned that night less cheery than of yore
Upon the hearth at home, would fall a hush
Among the kindly voices ; while the tongue
That little spake, lest it should thus betray
The heart's infirmity, sent Memory
A willing cruise across the many years
Since first I joined them ; parted now at last.

Soon were we ploughing through the surging sea,
Up Scotland's western and magnific firth,
Past the sweet pastoral and romantic spots
To which bright Summer sends the citizens
Of weary towns, far from all din and smoke ;
Spots dear and pleasant, to which many give
A consecrated corner in their hearts
Through the laborious and unjoyous year.
And soon I landed in that town of trade
Where I long led a pinched mechanic's life :
And not in vain ; for many a thing I learned
From keen encounter in that trying school.
There I grew self-reliant, and I saw
That busy heads had the most dexterous hands ;
I saw that temperance was ever housed
In snug abundance and a happy home ;
I saw intemperance was in league with shame,
With penury, and sorrow, and disease ;
I saw that industry befriends the man

Who plies, assiduous, his daily toil,
And him who with an earnest, studious mind
Digs for hid treasures in the land of thought.
For we must dig for every golden truth ;
The primal curse is on all noble things ;
We have to sweat for all we ever learn
Of greatness, or of nobleness, or truth.
I saw thus as I sat at home o' nights
Groping my way through the dim world of thought,
That all sweat is not corporal. I learned
That he who all day hammers the hot iron
Sleeps the contented night, while he whose soul
Wisdom hath smitten with her own fair face
Oft presses a vain pillow ; that the brain
Which has been touched with fellowship of things
Higher than mortal, tosses oft awake
While brawny Labour smileth in its dreams.
O men of my degree ! let us remember
That there are toilers though in other ways
And other fields than those in which we sweat ;
Men who have laboured, and are labouring still,
Up the steep steps to where God keeps reserved
His mysteries for the pure and reverent eyes
Of patient watchers through long days and nights.
And while we ponder these things, ne'er forget
That men in our position, with no spur
Save the high urging of their noble souls,
Have oftentimes planted their laborious feet

On pinnacles of science, and on heights
Where the pure breezes of fair knowledge blow.
Yes, there are workers in our earnest world
Uncatalogued among the sons of toil ;
And there are workers, too, among ourselves,
Whose toil is sharpest through long hours of night.

This wholesome discipline of daily toil
Was fraught to me with good, good obvious now ;
For ere that I was broken to the yoke
I was stiff-necked and stubborn, and my pride,
That hid itself beneath a calm composure,
Though not offensive, had yet certain root
Within me ; and anatomizing now
My feelings in that sad and distant time,
I may thus state them : Had I been a star,
I had put discord in the sphery music,
Were I not Venus, and burned brightest.
Though unambitious seeming I was yet
As covetous of honour as the sea
Is covetous of water though it drink,
Unslakeable for aye, a thousand streams ;
And if I am to tell the very truth,
The absence of the salutary rein
Of an accustomed home inclined my heart
Soon to forget or slight the good old precepts
I had so lately heard from loving lips.
And yet, instead of falling down in grief

And asking Heaven's forgiveness, I began
With vain and shallow sophistry of youth
To speculate upon the origin
Of human evil, daring to arraign
The just procedure of Heaven's ways to man.
'Tis easier to sneer than to repent,
And to hoot blasphemies against the stars
Than to sit down in abjectness of heart
And look our evil doings in the face,
And own that Heaven is no more ours by right.
O, sad, sad days, when I was never happy !
O, sad, sad thoughts, which I could wish erased
From the memorials of that guilty time !
Yet it was now, when my weak, anguished heart
Felt the full burden of its misery
And was slow-veering to a sounder sense,
That first I learned to find in Poesy
A solace and a blessing, as a friend
Who comes serenely in the gloom and brings
Some dear enchantment with him for the heart ;
And by the purity that ever weds
With sweetness and with beauty, tells us how
Even error can be turned and bent to good
By firmly fixing in the soul this truth,
Ne'er to be questioned, that all sin is death—
That when we rear ourselves unrighteous bowers
And loll among their shades, fell snakes will come
Out of the flowers and sting us unto death.

It was amid the tumult of these thoughts
That I sought Poesy, and found her Peace.
And is it true, then, what I ever deemed
A bitter and a dismal heresy,
That man's deep nature is akin to tears,
And never yields its sweetest melody
Until his breast, like the sad nightingale's,
Is poised against the thorn ? Is sorrow, then,
The chiefest fountain whence the Muses draw
Melodious thoughts that travel through the earth
On their high pilgrimage ? I cannot tell.
Let me shut down this chapter of my life,
Like some close charnel with offensive breath,
And walk with Hope beneath serener skies.

IV.

I come now to the pleasant, studious nights,
When, 'mid the books which then I learned to love,
I sought the fellowship of kingly minds ;
Men who have crowned themselves with regal thoughts,
And whose broad brows the nations have bound round
With loyal praises and with reverence.
But chiefly those great souls whose burning thoughts
Ran touched and kindled into Poesy
I loved to meditate—o'er whose high page
Sublimity outpoises her dread wing,

Awing men's spirits with divinest glimpse
Of unknown regions through majestic words.
Yet, more than even sublimity, I loved
The glowing page where I could bend and catch
The fragrance of the beauteous, tender thoughts
Which bring sweet solace to humanity ;
Where flowerets blow, and the green murmurous woods
Invite contented steps ; where purling brooks
Babble for ever to the quiet air ;
Where the still sunshine sleeps upon the roofs
Of rural cottages, on whose trim fronts
The rose and honeysuckle mix their breaths.
These thoughts I loved ; the calm and sweeter thoughts
That charm the mind, and nestle in the heart,
And which when read, for ever wed and mingle
With all we deem as tenderest, and lie
Like streaks of sunshine in the memory.
And what I loved with such a pure delight
I tried to follow or to emulate ;
And with what cunning my right hand possessed,
I worked and laboured at the grateful task
Of building into shape and comeliness
The aimless wanderings of my untrained mind ;
Nor do I deem myself presumptuous
(Or deem it as presumption in another)
To tread in the bright footsteps of the great
And glorious masters of my country's song.
And though beside these Giants I be dwarfed,

I and my thought, I deem it right to seek
The sweetest and most perfect utterance
Of all my thoughts, to which I can attain.
For my own thoughts, whatever be their worth,
And whether gathered from the earth or heaven,
Are all the store of treasure with which God
Entrusted me to find my lonely way
Through earth's perplexities to heaven's dear rest.
And this high purpose, sacredly pursued,
Begets and fosters self-analysis,
And self-acquaintance is the chief of knowledge,
Which must, like charity, begin at home.
O, let us ever with keen eye peruse
The manuscript and volume of our souls,
Books that indeed are "written for all time,"
And shall, when Time droops down his weary wing,
Be read and fingered through eternity.

Thus far and high I taught myself to aim ;
Yet thus I first learned humbleness of heart ;
For when I pondered the majestic thoughts
Of the crowned monarchs of the centuries,
I saw that nobleness of soul was oft
Twinned with meek modesty and gentleness,
And that sweet Love, with her resplendent face,
Was the glad sunshine and the light of life ;
That pride is from below, not from above ;
Yea, pride is sin, a darkening hateful film

Upon our vision, that should ever see
The great, the gifted, and the poor on earth,
As fellow-dwellers in one little star
Which God has hung to twinkle in the blue ;
And that for all who love Him the great God
Spreads the same banquet in the blooming land ;
That heaven has golden harps for all alike,
And that the peasant's horny hand shall touch
The chords of glory and of ravishment
As lightly as the softest in the land.

And so I strove and combated to urge
Pride and weak vanity from out my breast ;
And as there is no emptying the heart
Of vices and defects without the poise
Of the opposing virtues, I now sought
To open wide my bosom to Love's beam,
And to drink deeply of God's fount of truth,
Whose living waters still give humbleness
To him who stoops and drinketh ; and I thought
Of the pure precepts, and as pure examples,
That had been furnished me among the hills ;
The quiet, kindly deeds of lowly hearts
That wait in peace for their inheritance.

Thus diligently sought I to acquaint
My heart with wisdom ; and to aid my task
I wooed fair Nature in her robes of green

When Summer laugheth out the eyes of June ;
And on the calm eves, many an hour I stole
Of pure enjoyment, dashing to the knees
Through brushwood and the tangle of the glen,
Or lying placidly among wild flowers,
Perusing mysteries written in their eyes,
Breathing the blessing of the quiet time,
And fortifying faith with peaceful thoughts.
O pleasant days ! O happy, studious nights,
When first my soul conceived a higher aim
And faithfully pursued it ! while the hours
As they sped by breathed over me the joy
That recompenses labour, as I saw
My thoughts assume distinctness on my page,
Decked with such beauty as my hands could reach.
O happiness ! when for a few brief days
Out of the heart of every golden year,
I breathed again the breezes of the hills,
And tasted the sweet “charities of home.”
For Nature spread before my willing steps
A banquet that ne'er stalled ; and when I left
That dear society for toilsome days
I tried in my still musings to re-catch
The rapture of those moments, and to paint
Myself still sitting on the mountain's brow,
In calm thoughts pondering sweet Nature's face,
And how she blesses hearts that love her steps.
And of these musings, girt about with peace,

Some I transcribe now to my present page ;
Part, to exhibit my new phase of mind,
Part, as a record of long vanished joys.

Transcription.

Here sit I 'mong the lonely mountain crags
Where solitude hath built herself a home
Which none disturbeth but congenial spirits.
'Tis salutary for the youthful soul
Who just enough hath mixed with the base world
To know that it is base and foul of heart,
To leave the busy and engrossing streets
And with a humble, yet rejoicing heart,
To traverse valleys where wild roses bloom
And learn the wisdom of the silent hills.
The blithe breeze rustles to me where I sit,
Humming the old tune that is ever new.
Thou breeze, I thank thee, ceaseless traveller,
Thou light-winged minister to rosy health,
Who in well-doing never weariest.
Whence comest thou on thy benignant way ?
Perhaps thou heard'st Eve singing in her bower,
Flushed with the rapture of blest Paradise ;
Or, as she thoughtful paced, perhaps thou may'st
Have scattered round her Eden's holy balm,
And tossed the tresses on her sun-brown'd cheek ;
Perhaps thou strayedst among far sunny isles,

And sped thee over the majestic sea,
Wafting the cheery sailor to his home ;
Or danced thee prettily through summer woods,
Or lingered in green valleys 'mong the hills.
And now, on thine adventurous way thou com'st
To bluster round my ears, and spill fresh health
Upon my cheek ; and as thou brushest past
On thy blest pilgrimage, I hear thee say :
“ God sent me to thee, for He loves thee, man.”
Yes, it is good unto the pure in heart,
Ere yet the burden of the years is felt,
Far from the dull round of their daily toil
To seek the quiet of some grassy vale,
Or the rude bluster of the rocky shore,
Where Meditation, with an upward gaze,
May ponder o'er the sacredness of life.
And they who with a meek and gentle soul,
And with a wise and an observant eye,
Brush through the heather of the mountain side,
Or pierce the deep glen where the streamlet lurks,
To them shall be revealed those hidden ways
Where the pure wander with a calm delight,
Girding themselves about with holy thoughts,
Holy repentings and yet holier prayers,
To fit them for the strife that comes to all.
Up then, thou weary and benighted one,
Whose earth is God-less, though He fill the air ;
Go take thy sorrows and thy sullen cares

And shed them on the bracing mountain-winds ;
Go thread the tangle of the woodland brake,
And as thou goest, half in unbelief,
Thine eye shall catch new visions in the gloom,
And hope from the calm murmur of the rill.
Ah, there is wisdom blowing o'er the moor,
And growing in the woods, that none may know,
Except that sympathetic brotherhood
Whom Nature's hand hath delicately touched,
And whom some instinct drives away from towns.
O banish not the Maker from His earth,
Nor from thy blinded heart ; but know, O man,
That God doth mean thee reverently to tread
The flowery carpet of redeemèd earth ;
To trace His greatness in the starry heavens ;
His goodness in the pure sun's warming beams,
In dropping clouds, in the unwearied breeze,
In the rich harvests, and the tuneful streams.
Thou weary one, get this faith in thy heart,
Open the door and let it gently in ;
And radiant beauty then shall walk thy earth,
And thenceforth evermore shall be to thee
A voice unearthly in the sighing breeze,
A revelation in the blue of heaven,
A new divineness in the hush of night.

Thou mountain-stream that rushest by my side,
Down the deep channel which thyself hast dug,

Bright nursling of the hills, as on thou leap'st
And headlong tumblest over stones that charm
Thy uncouth fretting into melody,
Methinks thy haste is yearning of the heart,
And that thou longest to get back again
To ocean's bosom that engendered thee ;
And yet when thou attain'st the pleasant mead
And strayest among flowers, thou loiterest
On thy green-girdled way as if thou hadst
Weakly forgotten the high enterprise
Thou formedst in the silence of the hills.
Sad allegory oft of man's career !
When, in the season of impetuous youth,
Like the pale crescent growing to the full,
He purposes to flood the world with light ;
And when his soul, full-freighted with the hopes
That gleam with splendours of eternity,
Turns unto God, as sunflowers to the sun ;
Till in some moment of unguarded ease,
Surprised in its own citadel, the soul
Yields to the Tempter and his subtleties ;
And, all forgetful of the golden hopes
That clustered in sublimeness round his heart,
He lays his head, with its poor lost divineness,
Down in the dalliance of luxurious flowers.

Yet, surely, I belie thee, gentle stream,
Thou art no image of a soul's decline ;

But as thou strollest, humming thy low song,
Among embowering bushes, shedding round
Cool verdure and fertility, thou art
An image rather of those liberal souls
That freshen all around them ; and as thou
Broadenest onward to the sea, so they
Broaden and deepen on their bounteous way,
Enriched with many an unspoken blessing
And the calm radiance of a gentle life.
Fair stream, I love thee as a living thing !
I never wander by thy shady bank,
I never see me mirrored in thy wave,
I never list the prattle of thy tongue,
But that some feeling from the infinite
Flashes its revelation over me,
And reads to me new meanings of old truths
To hide and treasure in my inmost heart.
And thus I love to wander, like the bee,
Through the delightfulness of Nature's land,
In which with hand all silent and unseen
She spreadeth out her beauty like a scroll
Whereon are written wisdom and delight.
O Nature, Nature ! happy he who loves
To lay his head down on thy mother-lap
And look with rapture into thy fair face
Nor weary of thy beauty. Joy of joys
To see thee gleam through the delightsome air
Clothed with thy sunbeams, and to feel thy breath

Rich with wild fragrance as thou dancest past ;
To see thy beauty in the green of earth
And in the crystal of the wandering stream ;
To loiter 'mong the hedgerows and to hark
The gladsome carolling of woodland birds,
Or scarcely-seen larks hymning in the blue ;
To hear the breezes whisper to the leaves
Tales of glad sunshine and of dewy morns ;
To see the great sun on the verge of sight
Set with a flush of glory o'er the sea,
The waveless sea, as beautiful as if
No storm had swept it since its natal morn ;
To toil through purple heather on the hills
While the blood courses with a new delight
And health puts on its roses, which bloom best
When buffeted by breezes, nor depart
From the loved landscape till the shadowy night
Advances her lone starry sentinels.
Thrice happy he who thus can tread the earth
And feel her beauty stirring at his heart,
And whether from his wanderings he wend home
To a proud castle or a cottage door,
Sweet dreams shall ever haunt his peaceful sleep,
And a fair retinue of gentle thoughts
Shall strew upon his way those calm delights
Which heaven keeps garnered for the pure in heart.
For earth has shewn her mysteries to him,
And the green nook that nestles in the glen

Is now a sanctuary, where, absorbed
In its own hallowed musings, the bright soul
Gets daily new apparelled for the skies :
And thus the good and beauteous things of earth
Become a ladder all enwreathed with flowers,
Whose topmost round nigh reaches unto heaven,
Up which the spirit may delighted climb
To heavenly heights of vision, where the Lord,
Known as the Man of Sorrows upon earth,
Shall reach to him that hospitable hand
Pierced in Jerusalem, and take him in
To the blest mansions of ensheltering rest.

Full well I know that duty is no toying
With the fair muses, nor man's life a dream ;
And though I love them, the green mountain-side
And the dim forest are no home for me.
I seek them as a shrine, where evil thoughts
And evil feelings are oft charmed away ;
Yes, as a shrine, indeed, where He who knows
Our human frailty, with considerate hand
Hath scooped a pleasant and calm harbourage
For the tossed spirit to betake it to,
Far from the selfish conflict that perverts
Man's holier nature, making him forget
Or disbelieve his contract with the skies,
And losing thus to virtue and to God
A needed arm in the great strife of earth.

Quiet and thoughtfulness are best for man.
Great thoughts are born in silence, and base thoughts
Must die in solitude ; and he who goes
Into the quiet of the pleasant air,
Shall feel the sunshine that embrowns his cheek
Soft steal into his heart ; the wayside flowers
Will tell him innocent tales ; and to his cares
The green-banked streamlet will sing lullabies.
And though retirement may not quite uproot,
As by a spell, deep sorrow or remorse,
It will insensibly transmute them so
That sorrow will be changed to solemn thought,
And solemn thought wings ever to the sky ;
And on the tears of penitent remorse
New hope shall smiling sit, as weeping shower
Hangs forth its rainbow to emblazon it.

I thank thee, Nature (yet to me thou art
But sign and symbol of the Great Unseen),
I thank thee, I was fashioned by thy hand
To find a pleasure in the solitude
Which broods in blessing where thy beauty lurks ;
That thou endowedst me with an eye that marks
A sweet beneficence in wilding flowers
And the green grandeur of the spreading tree ;
An ear that hears pure homilies that are
Silently syllabled in drops of dew ;
A heart that feels the gracious influence

Of self-communion in the quiet ways
Where thought and happiness walk hand in hand,
And high endeavour follows not far off.
I thank thee, Nature, for these innocent joys
Which ne'er decrease by using, but are blest,
Like the old widow's store of meal and oil,
With new replenishing that knows no waste.
And thus, as I sit musing, sunny hopes
Steal in their gentleness across my heart
And bid me in their joyfulness rejoice ;
And having beautified all nature, point
With rosy finger to the gates of life,
Linking together thus with holy band
The beauteous earth and unimagined heaven.

V.

I had but few companions, as I found
That most companionship is but a clog
To the aspiring soul ; for few of youth
Feel those blest longings of the heart which seek
Their high solution in ennobling deeds,
And in still communings for many an hour
With nature face to face, listing the chime
Of the sweet harmonies of earth and sky ;
Those longings, doomed upon a restless foot
To wander on until at length they find
Something to crown our lowly lives withal.

One home there was to which I often found
My willing footsteps tend ; a happy home
Which wedded love lit with its hallowed beam.
Mark Chisholm won his bread in daily sweat
Of his fast-wrinkling brow ; a man who spent
Few leisure moments in ignoble ease ;
But when the labour of the day was past
He kept himself still busy at that task
In which to weary is to dim the crown
Which Heaven awardeth to faith's perfect work.
A poet was he in his strain of thought ;
And though he little had attempted verse
He felt the rapture of sweet Poesy,
The maid divine that singeth through the earth
And bids us as to banquet of the skies,
And sets to Hope's undying melody
Those strange, uneasy stirrings of the heart,
And discontented gropings after things
Higher and nobler than our souls have reached.
Unto this bourne Mark Chisholm had attained,
An often-troubled but undoubting man
Who went through scenes of suffering and woe
Oft sad at heart, yet ever in the gloom
Beheld the constant, gracious stars arise
To cheer him with their undespairing beam.

O how he loved that little, blue-eyed thing,
His beautiful, his loving, darling wife !

How cheery was the home round which she flung
The fragrance of her love ! how blithe her laugh,
Which it was dear heart happiness to hear !
Methinks I see Mark now, his day's toil o'er,
Striding on gaily to his peaceful home ;
I see the smile that lies in wait for him
On Lucy's face when he shall ope his door ;
I see him, their blithe supper o'er, sit down,
As Lucy thinks, a monarch on his throne,
Herself upon her footstool at his feet ;
I see her spread upon his royal knees
Some volume that he wishes her to read ;
I hear her trip it on the tongue of love ;
And now I see him issue from his home
On that blest errand which the heavens have sent
Us all upon, with mercy in our heart ;
I hear him at the bed of pain and sickness
Dispense low soothing words, and to the eye
Of the betossed and dying sufferers
Point out their home on high, whose towers are seen
Already gleaming in the opening heavens ;
I hear him praying with his fervent voice,
And see the pale and shrivelled hand held out
From the poor bed in mute acknowledgment ;
I think of all this self-denying life
Until my spirit, touched with reverence,
Descries new beauty, and new nobleness
In labour's grimy and ungainly face.

O beautiful to see heaven's warriors oft
Come from the rugged phalanxes of toil ;
And as the sweat-drops glitter on their brow,
To see humanity's primeval curse,
The curse of labour, with its dower of sweat,
Turned to a beauteous and ennobling crown.

No man I ever knew did feel as he
Earth's near relation to the judging heavens,
And that not merely in the higher phase
Of spiritual circumstance, but even
Its common history and scenery.
And when with him I sought the quiet air
On summer expeditions, speeding on
Through the green valleys or up heathy hills,
He would at times stand still and look with tears
On the extended prospect, feeling that
The mighty Giver of that bounteous gift
Of beauty and of grandeur, meant that all
The sunny landscape was for joy to man.
And being then aware that sometimes I
An evening dedicated to the muse,
He bade me keep my heart in healthful play
By pondering Nature's ever varying face ;
“Hark,” said he, “to the wondrous, ceaseless hymn
Which Nature singeth in the listening ear
And hideth as a treasure in wise hearts.
Go in thy joyousness, and bid the winds

Gambol around thee ; bid the summer sun
Play on thee his benign artillery ;
Bid the brooks dance before thee, tripping it
To their own wandering music ; bid the flowers
Bring incense to thee in their heaven-filled censers ;
Bid the larks crown thee with their rapturous songs ;
Bid golden sunsets and great moons put on
For thee their glories ; bid the wondrous night
Hang over thee her spangled canopy.
This do, perceiving with no dubious eye
That all this beauty, all this gentleness,
This wealth of fragrance, this pure feast of joy,
Is spread by God's good hand invisibly
To cheer us mourners on His troubled earth."

Then added he : "There is reserved for me
Another service and another fate.
God sent me on an embassy to earth,
Not laying on me the sweet Poet's task
To fling out beauteous and majestic thoughts
Bright soaring on their own wings through the earth ;
Nor in the temper of the olden seers
To judge the nations in the Great King's name,
Upon my shoulder bearing a dread quiver
Filled with the red-hot thunderbolts of heaven ;
But in another, and a gentler mood,
To take my place around a lowly hearth
And learn the golden lesson of Content

Beneath the cottage roof ; ever to strive
That round our hearts and hearthstone there might beat
A tide of love and love's sweet happiness ;
To live among the poor, and do the work
And the stern duties of a common man ;
Yet ever in the silence of calm thoughts
Pondering the cross of old Jerusalem ;
And as the seasons graciously revolve
Learning the lesson of the falling rain,
And the glad sunshine and the healthful breeze ;
Cradled in poverty and reared in want
To covet nothing but the grace of heaven,
And clearer vision of its gleaming crown ;
Until at last the winter-storms shall rave
Above my low and unremembered grave.”
As these impassioned words died on my ear
And vanished 'mong the sunshine, my own eyes
Were filled with tender, yet with blissful tears,
And I discerned that Wisdom, like pale Death,
Fell democrat and leveller of things,
Calls with a silent and impartial step
At the poor cottage and the dome of kings.

VI.

One well-remembered summer-time came round,
Bringing again my yearly homeward tour ;

And urged in letters of my father oft,
Mark and his wife agreed to go with me.
Right merry was our passage o'er the sea,
And pleasant was our travel through the fresh
And flower-girt gorges of the friendly hills ;
And now the dear old cottage came in sight,
Hidden 'mong clinging roses on the wall ;
That nest from which long years ago I flew
With mingled sorrow and expectancy,
But unto which I gaily wandered back
In many a golden dream, wherein I was
A cricket leaping on the hearth at home,
Loud-chirruping my sweet contentment there.
And now I came, in fond reality,
In sight of the old walls, with the two friends
Whom with calm circumspection I had picked,
Like two choice pearls from the stream of life.
We went up cheerily, with muffled glee,
But when I entered at the open door
A strange, unwonted gloom was over all.
Some sense of dull discomfort lay athwart
And discomposed the features of the old
And well remembered mansion of my heart.
The window-shutters, partly opened, made
An artificial twilight in the day ;
The fire—long unreplenished—had gone out ;
The clock ticked mournfully upon the wall :
My mother sat all dismal and alone,

And froze me with a miserable smile
When I went up to greet her. "What is this?"
I asked in sorrow and in fearfulness:
She shook her drooping head, and sought again
With her sad eyes to reperuse the ground.
I saw May musing by the apple tree
In the trim garden, and I hurried out
To learn from her what sad calamity
Had visited our dwelling. She was pale
When first I saw her, but turned ghastlier
When she saw me, and heard my questioning.
She came and put her hand in mine, and raised
Her meek eyes unto heaven (even now I see
The sunlight gleaming in their gracious drops),
And while the hand trembled in mine as trembles
The leaf in the sore tempest, she bent now
Her solemn gaze upon me, and said: "Pray,
Go pray, my brother; for no human heart
But one straight from the converse of the sky
And counsels of the Infinite, may hear
Unvengefully the tidings of this day.
Trust not thy heart, my brother"—here grief stayed
The pathos of her language, and a tear
Fell in its misery through the sunny air.
When calm again, she said: "Brother, be brave,
And bravery is kind and charitable."
I left her; and along the silent way
I wrestled with the bodings of my heart,

And cried to heaven in mercy to transform
All hate and vengeance into calm forgiveness.
(For now a fear that bordered on the truth
Had crept awry into my trembling heart.)
And when I sought again my sister's side,
She stooped and plucked a daisy at her feet,
And said, still looking at the simple flower,
And letting fall a tear into its cup :
“ We have no sister, brother, she is fled.”
What a strange calmness in the hopeless words !
Yet well I saw the record of deep grief
In the enforced composure of her face.
We stood in silence for some minutes' space,
As sorrow-stricken, comfortless a pair
As the deep sunshine shone upon that day.
Returning slowly to our cheerless house
We found our father talking with the guests
Whom I had brought at such an ill-timed hour.
How shrunken now his face, on which I looked
A year ago with pride and reverence !
How shame and grief steal from the countenance
Its pleasant comeliness, and from the frame
Its strain of vigour and of stalwartness,
And in a short night do the work of years
In burdening shoulders with decrepitude !
May sped to Lucy with a friendly hand :
And as they stood together, I could see
The close resemblance which the faces bore,

And which, as I remember, when at first
I met with Lucy drew my friendly love—
I liked her for her likeness unto May.
They sat down by my mother's side and talked
To her in words of a kind, kindred grief :
And as the words fell (many a gap between
Of silence, or of sighs) I grieved to see
Her old head bent in hopelessness of grief.
My mother, time was hoarying thy hair
Gently, yet surely—but the almond tree
Shall henceforth flourish on thy drooping head ;
Time, ever busy, shall be busier now
In chiselling wrinkles on thy face so fair ;
And thy sad heritage, as child of man,
The heritage of shame, and pain, and woe,
Shall be dealt out to thee with lavish hand
And be poured, molten, in thy weary breast.
Yet when we look into the roots of things,
Who shall resolve me if pale sorrow is
Not unto man God's chief ambassador
Since heaven most woos us in the guise of grief ?

I learned, alas ! three nights gone by she fled
(She never then was named by her own name),
Unknown and unsuspected by them all,
With some young scion of a gentle house.
And when the night grew on old Andrew Wood
And Benjie Brown, both came as comforters.

They blent their grief with ours, to know sweet peace,
So long our guest, had sadly left our home,
Scared by a daughter's all unnatural hand.
For Benjie, he could only trust that yet,
Howe'er it seemed, the issue might not be
As dreadful as the horror of our fears ;
For was he not a gentleman, and would
His gentle breeding not have taught him this :
To spare the wrecking of a poor man's home ?
“ Ah, she is young, and may be innocent ;
'Tis man's part to lament, not to condemn,
And rigour is not righteousness,” said Mark.
And Andrew, too, said with a sober brow :
“ I miss the sweet face, with its merry laugh
Of ever-ready welcome. Ah, poor thing !
Her smile was sweeter than the flowers of spring ;
Ah, she was pleasant, but ”——

“ Unworthy too,”

My father cried, “ I know what you would say ;
To lay her home in ruins, lay it bare
To every wind that blows, turning its joy
To heavy-hearted hopelessness and shame.
I can hear none condemn her but myself ;
She was my child, brought up upon my knees,
Round whom there twined so many sunny hopes
That shone far, far away, which ever bind
Us to the face that we have loved so long,
And though much sinning she is yet my child.”

The old man ceased. There is a time for words,
There is a time, too, for relieving tears.
He bowed his head, loud-sobbing like a child.
O sad to see the father weeping there,
Over the body of his murdered hopes !
O sad to think that not an eye was dry
That night in that so lately happy home,
And all hearts wretched where Content late dwelt !
How much of suffering one bad act can bring !
One cloud can hide the sun's vast continent,
Making earth chill, and drear and desolate !

When, after tears had brought their short relief
And our two visitors had said good-bye,
The wind had risen to a steady gale.
I sallied forth and slowly sought the woods,
Whose groaning ever seems in unison
With the dark mystery of troubled thoughts,
As if some spirit of unrest and woe
Inhabiting that dull, secluded scene,
Called on all troubled and perturbèd things
To mourn in concert and in sympathy.
It brings a strange relief, akin to joy,
To be abroad on such a roaring night
When some dull pain is eating at our heart,
Which the storm's fury lashes into rest ;
And when the fierce commotion of the time
Gifts us with new-born faculty to rise

And toss our sorrows to the angry winds,
And bid them rend them. Sweet bewilderment
It was to me to stand within the wood
And hear the storm crash through among the trees
As if in wild delirium of glee ;
To feel my blood stir with the tempest's wrath,
To launch my spirit on the tempest-car,
And catch a rapture where might lurk a fear.
I glanced up at the crescent labouring moon
Breasting the clouds that swept across the sky ;
And as I looked some shadow caught my eye
Darkening the moonshine falling through the trees.
I looked in sudden wonderment around,
And saw a figure, ghost-like, in the gloom.
I followed, 'twas a woman's ; soon I had
Pale Margaret, living, sobbing in my arms.
“ What mystery is this ? Why are you here ? ”
I asked in wonder, fearing her reply.
It was some moments ere her sobbing left
A passage for her words. At length she said,
Her cold arms clasping me around the neck :
“ Why in the wood, my brother, this wild night ?
Does sorrow for thy erring sister drive
Thee here to wander with all sleepless things ?
I cannot speak to thee ; and yet I must.”
I grasped her closer in my fearful arms
Lest this might be a dream, and I should wake,
And, waking, lose her from my arms for ever.

“ O tell me, sister, are you innocent ?
Or come you back a maimed and undone thing,
For men to gossip of around their fires,
And God to chasten in His hot displeasure ? ”
“ That moon,” she cried, among the deafening gusts,
“ That climbing moon, and that bright lonely star
That peers through the rent cloud there, know as much
Of earth’s pollution, as I know of sin
With that man whom I loved.” Blow on, ye winds ;
Well have ye blown repose into my heart,
Which now rests calmly as the rainbow sleeps
Above the strain and tumult of the storm.
Thus thought I ; and I raised a thankful eye
To God, whose watchful providence had thus
Brought Hope’s blest dawn at such unlooked-for hour.
And then I kissed her ; but forbore to ask
The story of her wrongs. She recommenced :
I scarce could hear her for the roaring winds
Which flung the sweet, sad words athwart the night,
The gloomy, roaring and bewildering night.
“ Ah ! there is folly near akin to sin,
And in its consequence as sad as sin.
Such is my folly. Walter, pity me.
I seized at greatness ; and I thought me safe
In honourable marriage ; but it proved—
Ah, brother ! let me spare thine ears the tale.
I loved him with a pure but foolish love ;
I loved him, nor will rail upon him now.

He would not have me" (ah, even now I feel
How the winds took the sad and simple words
And with a buffet flung them in my face);
" He would not have me as his faithful wife,
And never should he have me otherwise.
Last night, heart-sick, I wandered to these shades
By help of moonlight and the gleam of stars;
But when the morning shone upon the scene,
I could not venture to the door I shamed.
I saw my mother standing weeping there;
I threw myself in torment on the grass,
And filled the daisy-cups with brimming tears——"
I stopped the sad narration; and I thought
Of sweet May standing desolate with me,
Dewing the daisy with *her* falling tears,
And saw how, all unthought of and unknown,
The sinner weepeth as the sinned against.
I led her home, my dear, lost Margaret,
The lost now found in honour and in truth,
Engaging weeping May to take her in
When the worn household had retired to rest.
Sleep calmly, burdened souls; the morn shall bring
Rest to the weary, hope unto the hearts
That hoped for nothing underneath the skies.
Sleep on, ye mournful; the unstaying hours
Are knitting silently a robe of peace
Wherewith to gird you when ye shall awake;
And God Himself shall compass you about
With songs of gladness and deliverance.

VII.

The morning came, but never dawn had brought
Upon its rosy wings tidings more sweet
Than those that waited now to bless that home.
Gently the parents heard them from May's lips,
While Margaret failed to summon fortitude
To face her mother's and her father's eye.
How pale and meagre looked the downcast face !
For shame, and fear, and hunger had laid siege
Unto the citadel and seat of life.
Those three days' fortunes touched with ghastlier hue
The lilies pining on her pensive cheek ;
Sorrowful lilies, all bedashed with rains
That fell in sad drops from the weeping eyes.
Ah ! Margaret, thou wert foolish, but thou hast
Youth and the future—hope's chief elements.
Thou shalt outlive thy sorrow ; and even now
Half of that bitterness of death is past ;
Thou shalt yet smile serenely, like the day
Whose morn was shaken by a thunder-storm.

My mother, like the mountain ash exposed
To the loud tempest that sweeps overhead,
Had bowed in sorrow but submissively
To the fierce blast's inexorable bidding ;
But as warm sunshine and cool summer dews
Robe the dashed bush in renovated green,

She shall in measure yet repair her loss :
But my poor father—blown, alas ! and bent,
And shattered, like the great tree in its strength,
Shall ne'er regain his stately stalwartness,
But carry to his silent grave the scars
And sad mementoes of that storm of Fate.
Infirmities are sapping now his strength, .
His eye is dimming daily, and his locks
Grow white as daisies on the churchyard sward,
His resting-place ere many months are o'er ;
Yet sad, not piteous, a good man's decline.
The totter of the step once firm and free,
The palsy of the hand all vigour once,
The shrunk and toothless face, once fresh and fair,
The treble of the voice, so manly once,
The wreck and dissolution of the frame
Which cannot house the spirit fittingly
And which then hies it unto other skies :
All this, even to the Christian himself,
Though solemn, is not sorrowful. He knows
That when unclothed, he shall be clothed upon.
Then totter out, my father, the few moons
Heaven has appointed for thy longer stay ;
And when thou hast attained the shores of bliss
No stranger shalt thou be, nor heaven be strange.
For with thy God thou wisely hast begun
Acquaintanceship on earth. God is thy friend ;
Thy Saviour, bruised for thee, thou knowest well,

His name was ever music to thine ear ;
Thy hopes all clustered around Jesu's name ;
Thy longings were to see His gracious face,
And praise Him better than thou couldst do here,
In that rejoicing and all-fragrant land
Where tears and sighing shall have passed away,
And the rose blossom without wounding thorn :
The heaven's inhabitants are friendly all ;
Those spirits who have never lapsed from God,
And done His errands from eternity ;
And those, too, who have reached that happy shore,
Through the dark valley of the shade of death,
Earth's nearest neighbourhood unto the heavens.
Bright thus thy prospects, and thou knowest well
The measure of all things is how they end.
What though thou wert born lowly, and thou hadst
To learn contentment on a bit of bread !
Thou didst not covet what thou didst not miss.
And now comes Faith's last grand Apocalypse :
The opened heavens, thy Father reconciled ;
Thy loving Saviour leading His redeemed ;
The angels' smile, the dear society
Of spirits of the just now perfected ;
The glad, resounding symphonies of heaven ;
And Life's pure river flowing through amidst
The golden streets of New Jerusalem.

My brother Oswald, at the sea for long,

My father old and greatly broken down,
They all besought that I should stay at home
And manage as I might the little farm.
So Mark and Lucy journeyed back alone,
Freighted with loving wishes of us all ;
For much of that restraint that must have else
Hung on our intercourse at that dread time
Was smoothed away like ice before the sun
By their wise counsel and kind sympathy.

How that old time is graven on my heart,
With the good precepts and the sage advice
(Bright with a halo as from unseen worlds)
Wherewith the dying old man counselled me !
Our common resting-place, in the short walks
We had together oft, was 'neath the shade
Of that thick wood where I found Margaret ;
And now I give some fragments of his talks.
"This is a land of shadows. See me here—
I am no poor man, as I thought myself ;
I am a King, and waiting for my crown.
Why then, like children, should we e'er lament
When comes grim Death, and not untimely plucks
Earth's fading roses, taking them away
To bloom, unfading, in the land of bliss ?
And yet I know that you will grieve for me ;
The old man, though a trouble, will be missed,
His empty arm-chair will be text enough

For many a silent tear. Walter, my son,
Be it thy task to cheer the widow's heart ;
Be thou a father to the fatherless,
And see that God's great name be feared by all
Within my household, when I am no more.
Be sober in thy thoughts ; and though not dull,
Go not through life as goes the headlong brook
With song and dance to the engulphing sea.
Thou hast a love for books, and books are good,
And though I shall not live to see the day,
It may be that thy God shall give thee yet
Some message of His own to glad men's thoughts ;
If so, be thankful, and resolve thou wilt
Make it God's opportunity, not thine.
Choose ever worthy themes ; themes such as thou
May'st look upon with pleasure and with hope
When thy hair whitens, and thy hand, like mine,
Is grateful for the succour of a staff.
My son, be thou a humble, praying man.
Herein is man dissevered from the brutes ;
They all can *feel*, and some not meanly *think* ;
But it is man's prerogative to pray.
O waft thee often on the wing of prayer
Into that Presence where no thoughts dare come
That are not meek, and just, and virtuous ;
Nourish thy soul on the recorded Word
Of Him who is Almighty ; for without
This exercise and buttress, thy best faith

Will stoop its soaring, and will fall and die
As the bird falleth on its broken wing.
My hour is come, but thine is coming too.
Think nothing great, or worthy, or august,
That looks not so when Death's pale shadow falls
And palls it with its awful sombreness.
I would not sadden thee, for thou art young ;
Yet put not from thee frequent thought of death ;
The thought that solemnises still exalts.
What is this life of thine ? ask oft, and let
The death-watch ticking in thy breast reply.”
Man's life is earnest, but how earnest is
The eloquence that speaks from dying lips !
I deeply drank its spirit, and if now
I seek to bind sobriety of thought
Among the flowerets which my hand can reach
In Poesy’s fair realm, it is that I
Have learned obedience to a good man’s will.

And so the time passed by, each weary month
Stealing some remnant of a grace or strength
From the frail body or the manly face.
I well remember that slow-pacing time ;
And how the earth around me took the hue
And caught the feelings of my darkened mind.
The dewdrops of the morning were no more
The precious diamonds wherewith secret Night
Bedecks the green leaves and the gladsome flowers.

I rather thought, reflecting on the woe
Time, as he passes, bringeth to the heart,
That he must sometimes curse his cruel scythe
Which lays so desolate else-hopeful hours,
And that the dewdrops are the tears he sheds
Over the sheaves of sorrow he has reaped.
The woodland birds trilled no blithe roundelay,
But taught their joyousness a sober note ;
And as I bent and looked into the flowers
Which seemed to me to image back my grief,
I loved them better than in blissful hours.
And yet I knew, even when I fancied thus,
That Nature paceth onward with calm step,
Knowing no sorrow at her passive breast,
Nor sympathizing with man's joy or woe,
And heedless whether he may waste or use
The fleeting moments, bringing life or death.

It was late Autumn of the mellow year
When his poor life slow-flickered to its end ;
And although plenty had enriched our barn,
Some disenchanting, melancholy thing
Sat mocking at our dismal harvest-home,
Blinding gay laughter with its own dull tear,
And thrusting through all jollity with sighs.

I see us standing round the weary bed,
Watching the dim eye dimming with the shades

That herald in the everlasting Night.
I hear the last farewell ; he took the hand
Of my poor mother, who sobbed out her grief ;
They mingled their sad tears, and then he said :
“ Farewell, my Mary, we shall meet again.”
And then the hand of each of us he took,
And with the pathos of a mournful grasp,
A loving-mournful and a lingering grasp,
He took a mute farewell, and then prepared
To take his journey whither it might lead.
His breath is past, and we no longer see
A loving father, but a father’s dust ;
His work is over, and he resteth now.
Ah, although few will live a good man’s life,
Yet all would wish to die a good man’s death ;
For in the darkness of that solemn hour
He only with Faith’s strong, enkindled eye
Sees in pale Death a messenger of love,
Not cutting down with fell, remorseless hand,
But grafting kindly into higher life.

Both Mark and Lucy hastened back again,
And with their presence cheered our house of woe.
On the third day from that on which the soul
Fled its clay dwelling-place we sadly bore
The body to the grave—
The mould was shovelled in upon the dead,
And dead leaves with it. Rest in peace, the dead,

Rest for a little ; soon we all shall claim
Our resting-place in silence by thy side.
That day I sought the converse of my heart,
And I sought heaven, the refuge of the sad
And weary-hearted since the sky was blue ;
For there the King of all the earth doth sit,
Who makes kings tremble on their thrones, and stays
The sobbing of the orphan. I sought Him,
The great upbinder of the bruised heart ;
That heavenly visitant who in his love
“ Brought life and immortality to light ” ;
Mercy’s sweet words, which should be writ as if
In glorious sunbeams on each Christian’s grave ;
Which flash their blest imperishable light
Upon the hopeless eye, and gently turn
The rustling of the grass upon the graves
Into mysterious melody for aye.

O immortality, thou light of life,
Thou music in the discords of the earth,
Thou sittest in thy far serenity,
And with thine own bright face interpretest
The woes and mysteries of mortal life !
Had we ne’er known thee, never seen thy face,
Ne’er heard the melody of thy sweet voice,
Ne’er followed thee in thought to that bright land
Where still thou strayest among fadeless flowers ;
When our frail being melted like a dream

We might have taught our souls severe content
To make the Darkness pillow for our heads ;
Severe content in that last dismal hour
Around our cold and silent couch to draw
The pall and curtain of eternal Night.
But well we know thee ; we have seen thy star,
Thy bright star, in the east, and we are come
To worship Him, Most High, of whom thou art
But an expression and an attribute.
Blest immortality, thou friend of man,
Hope of his heart, and vigour of his arm,
We cannot want from our benighted earth
The blest refulgence of thy sacred light ;
We cannot lose thy suretyship of joys
That throw a splendour on the universe,
The joys that flush the rapt believer's cheek
And o'er-compensate all earth's miseries.
We carry with us to the grave this faith
Whose quenching were the plucking of the sun
From life's blue firmament. Shine on, O sun,
And with thy lustre gild the tears of earth.
My father, can I think thee dead for aye,
Thy life some spilt or broken thing, which no
Blest resurrection shall yet gather up ?
Wert thou my father yesterday, and is
Dust of the valley now thine only name ?
Ah, no such vain philosophy be mine ;
The bitter cup which ministers new health,

Or brings back blessed hope, a man may drink ;
But not the cup whose bitterness is death,
And hopelessness, and night without a dawn,
Night whence the stars flee shuddering away.
But 'tis enough ; with God's blest promises,
As with an angel's wing, I brush away
All this unhallowed gloom ; and now I see
The sun of righteousness arise in strength
Circling through time and through eternity ;
That sun of righteousness whose beams shall reach
The slumberers in the tomb with rousing ray
When they have slept enough ; and they shall rise
To meet the Lord triumphant in the air.
O mighty grave, where now thy victory ?
Death, the all-terrible to sons of men,
Thou now art dead, struck through with thine own dart ;
Faith, bind thy wounds up, for the fight is o'er,
Robe thee in fair apparel of the sky,
For thou hast conquered, and now comes thy rest.

VIII.

Thus, as the sorrow-cloud passed over me, I had
Sweet Hope for my companion, and when now
I had emerged from out its sullen gloom
I sought, as wisely as I might, to find
Instruction in the darksome discipline.

The chief effect it wrought in me was this :
The world past death did not seem now afar,
But lost its strangeness and its awfulness,
And came and mingled in my common thoughts.
“ My father, thou art there ! ” thus thought I oft ;
And, often pondered, that dim land became
Inwoven in the texture of my mind ;
Yea, was a friendly and a cordial thing,
And welcome, like a dear familiar face.
How distant, yet how near, are the two worlds !
The mortal breathing world, and that which sleeps
In its own silence, never broken yet.
The slight partition of a little breath,
Which death breaks down, makes bar impassable,
And farthest limit unto flesh and blood ;
But long ere we have reached the bourne of death,
Our subtle spirit the vain barrier leaps
And sits and communes in a dream divine
With spirits of our friends of long ago ;
And what the spirit dreams becomes to it
A sacred treasure and reality.
These thoughts brought staid sobriety, not gloom,
And I ne’er grudged them refuge in my heart,
Or put them from me, for I thought them good.

Mark, who on our bereavement hastened here,
Stayed with considerate kindness a few days,
And oft with him I trod the lonely glen,

Shedding its leafy honours, or the moor,
Sprinkled with bleaters. In these solitudes
We told our feelings, and desires, and hopes,
And comforted each other with the things
That take no shadow from the ills of life,
But shine for ever, like untroubled stars.
He told me of the battle of his life ;
Not daily toiling, for that comes to most,
But his especial battle ; when he went
Into the home of brutish ignorance,
And talked of duty and the love of God,
To hear his solemn words tossed with an oath
Of fiendish laughter, or of scorn, away.
“Nor is this wonderful,” he said, while lay
A massive thoughtfulness upon his face ;
“For few will seek the wretched, and the vile :
Not from hard-heartedness, but sloth of heart,
Or from an inability to see
How this hell-legion may be dispossessed,
And those poor prodigals reclaimed to good.
They tell me sometimes, as to solve their woe,
That they were *made* to mourn ; but well I see
In the wild flashing of their angry eyes
The soul’s proud protest that it is not so,
And to injustice somewhere that they trace
Their degradation and their misery.
And those fierce flashes of their discontent
Bring me a chastened joy, as proof that man

Was made for happiness, since he resents
Innately thus the gloomy opposite
As an injustice, and a mockery.
Though all seems quiet, all is not at rest.
We know how that the unsuspected hill
Nurses the young volcano in its breast ;
And while the landscape smileth and is glad,
A cauldron of destruction boils beneath.
There are fierce spirits loose upon the earth,
Broke from the dens of ignorance and sin :
This task, O world, remaineth unto thee,
To seize and tame them. Wilt thou take them, then,
And meet their fury with a hate as blind,
And cage them in the dungeon of despair,
Again to burst forth with avenging swoop,
Drunk with mad frenzy, terrible as fiends ?
Or wilt thou rather charm the Fury down,
By gently wooing at its rugged breast,
With just and kindly deeds that find their way
To what is yet of human in the heart,
Awaking there old memories of things
Deemed dead for ever, brightening the earth
With new-found happiness and new-found hope ?
Here, then, is thy alternative, O world ;
See that thy choice be prudent." Here he ceased,
But soon continued thus the darksome theme
That lay so near to his unselfish heart :
"Nor in the eye of wisdom need the choice

Be difficult or dubious ; for Love,
Blest Love, alone can solve the mystery
And the dread problem of the crowded lanes.
I found a woman, helpless, worn, and wild,
Her child upon her knee, at her low fire,
That gave no light, and needed all its heat
To feed its own frail life. I tried to find
By what wise avenue I best could gain
A passage to the heart. I took her child,
And asked her if its trusting, gladsome smile
Cast *no* blest light on her benighted earth ?
I told her that, all poor and destitute,
The God-man Jesus was bereaved as she,
A homeless, cheerless wanderer on earth ;
I told her how His grieved eye was wet
With tears of sweetest love, that sought man's good
And mourned his sinfulness, until at length,
As in despair at man's ingratitude,
He broke His heart o'er old Jerusalem ;
I told her of the bright and tearless land
Which He had purchased, and would give to all
Who, heavy-laden, come to Him for rest,
And that her sorrows, and her pains would be
Sweet-lightened by His love. Her heart seemed touched.
I saw her oft ; and from that happy day
I tasted somewhat of the blessedness
Which God drops down upon the head of him
Who turns a sinner unto righteousness.

Oh ! if the Churches would forego their strifes,
And let no more the arches of the great
And glorious temple of pure peace and love
Ring with the war-whoop of a mean revenge,
And feud, and envy, and traducing words ;
But leagued together in one brother-band,
And led by the great Captain in the heavens,
Would march with flying banners of the truth,
And to the music that glads Zion hill,
Against the strongholds of the enemy :
This were a warfare worthy of her arms.
O, 'tis the arch-trick of the Fiend to cause
Division 'mong the one God's worshippers,
And it is devilish joy to him to see
Fraternal swords crossed thus in bitter hate ;
But these things are unseemly, and must cease.”
He paused a space, as if with heart too full,
Then with a sigh he recommenced his theme :
“ Sometimes my mind is almost overborne
With thoughts that sadden and disquiet me ;
But unto you heaven gives another task ;
Another and an easier. You have
Here, 'mong your hills, no frightful, crowded dens
Where Vice glares at you with malignant eyes,
And is suspicious of your best intents ;
Where Hunger and low Ignorance combine
Their ruthless tyrannies to bind the soul
Unto the seen, and sensual, and vile ;

But here your task is (if it be a task)
To woo your furrows to a plentier yield,
To teach your acres how to busk themselves
With pleasant fruitage of the mellow year,
To wander through the sunshine, and to think
That it is God's sweet mercy that doth warm
The sunbeam sloping on His dear-loved earth.
And even although, as it will chance, you have
To battle with the seasons, and maintain
A controversy oft with wind and shower,
The little forethought needed to success
Is in itself a pleasure. Well I know
That grief and trial are God's mystery,
And fall down like the dew all secretly
On dwellers here as in the peopled towns ;
But I know likewise that the dwellers here
(Known to you all, and pitied by you all
When trouble overtakes them) lay their hearts
Far barer unto mercy's healing hand,
And render it more easy thus to make
The tear of sorrow as it forms and falls
Beam with the promise of a brighter day.
I almost envy you your peaceful life
And opportunities of doing good
Among these quiet scenes. To bind the heart,
To dry the bitter and bereavèd tear,
To teach the ignorant fair wisdom's way,
To seek high heaven yourself with purer eye

When seeking it with those you comforted,
And so to grow old, ever doing good—
Be this your life, and to this life be true,
And when the mystery of Providence
Casts a dull shadow on your own hearthstone,
I need not bid you then to call to mind
That sorrow is not master on the earth,
And that with patience, chastisement shall pass
And all things work together for your good.”

“And you return,” I then said with a glow
Of admiration flushing at my heart,
“To go through lanes unvisited of Hope.”

“Yes, thither go I,” the brave Mark replied,
“My life devote I to the roughsome work,
Which has its pleasures, tender and not few ;
For something whispers in my heart and says
That this is what has been appointed me
As my chief portion underneath the sun,
To fight the fierce wild beasts of Ephesus.”

He finished with a quiet cheery smile.

Farewell, dear Mark, here we shake hands and part.
Thou noble soul, no more upon my page
Shall thy name brighten as I look at it,
For now my task is growing to an end.
God’s hero, thou hast often led the way
To deeds of high and heavenly enterprise ;
And as I meditate the saintliness
Of all thy life, thou seemest to mine eye

As Priest and Legate of the Holy One
With Urim and with Thummim on thy breast ;
And as thou partest from my page, I deem
The angel not unworthily employed
Who registers the tenor of thy life
In the recording volume of the skies.

Let many days pass unrecorded here ;
Days pleasant to the eye of memory
And bright with reflex of some moral effort.
I only say I tried to shape my life
As faithfully as busy time allowed
To Mark's high prototype. Besides such work
(Which I regarded with the chiefest eye)
I gathered oft, as I found thoughts and time,
Into our barn, which served as lecture-hall,
As many of the dwellers round about
As cared to come, and there I spake to them
With what of eloquence and moving power
An earnest purpose and research could give,
Of the great marvels of the earth and sky,
And of the mortal history of man.
Yet ever in my narrative of these
I studiously heeded to let fall
The sober shadow of eternal things.
Their wonted sphere of thought I strove to widen,
And by awaking unused faculties
To charm them onward unto higher steeps

Where Knowledge sitteth with her wreath of joy
To bind the lofty and adventurous head.
And let no man despise these humble ones ;
Not few of them had minds, which, trained aright
By Study's careful hand, had shone with gleam
Of no contemned lustre. Minds untrained
Are like the channel of the mill-race, oft,
Empty, the water being sluiced away ;
But let the stream in, and it soon will set
The mighty mill in motion ; so with man :
Let in the stream of knowledge to fill up
The vacant channel of his untaught mind,
And new-born thoughts harmoniously will move
The subtle, complex mind's machinery.
I found it so ; some had an aptitude
Innate and wonderful for abstract themes,
And conned old books and pondered till at last
They put in peril my supremacy.
And I rejoiced to see them growing thus
In knowledge of the many things that give
A charm and solace to man's earthly life,
Nor overlooking the majestic truths
Which constitute the soul's high nutriment,
Of which partaking they shall never die.

In most of this, good Andrew took a part,
Devoted, wise in wisdom that becomes
Man's gray hairs best, making them reverent,

Touched with the shadow that unseen doth fall
Around his later years, and heightens them
To something more divine. And Andrew said
His daily bread was sweeter to him now
Since it was seasoned with some work for good,
Ere Death should come and blow his candle out.
Thus lived he 'mong the hills his useful life,
A life unknown, untrumpeted on earth.

IX.

Again I throw a gap of many days
Into this history, which I design
As record merely of such salient points
As stand, outjutting, in my memory,
And which have shaped or influenced my life.
The plundering years, as they sped o'er us, spared
Our happy home, yea, added to its joy,
And blest our garners with prosperity ;
Till now at length a shade fell on its peace,
A saddening shade, though with a phase of joy.
It lost both sisters on the self-same night,
By marriage, not by death ; and I indeed
Lost thus much sunshine from my home, and some
From out my being ; and we lost them thus :
One night returning from my harvest fields
Fatigued but joyous o'er a busy day,

I found two neighbour yeomen in our home,
One holding May's, the other Margaret's hand.
Each pled for my approval and consent
To marry her whose hand lay in his own.
The sisters, with their cheeks aglow with sense
Of mild confusion and a touch of shame,
Bent each her head, down-drooping like the rose
When it is weighted with the drops of night.
I said I feared it would quite ruin me
To tocher suitably two brides at once,
And as they did deserve ; and then we stood
In silence for a moment, till each rose
Lifted its down-drooped head. The one rose said :
“ Dear Walter, may I ? ” and the other said :
“ May I, dear Walter ? ” What could Walter do ?
As if twin roses growing on one stem,
Which you had loved and fondled in your hand
As they were living and could know your love,
Should be strange-gifted with a tongue and speech,
And ask your hand to pluck them from their stalk
And place them, blooming, on some breast they loved,
Could you refuse them, though you long might miss
Some charm from the old walk ? No more could I
Gainsay an argument so sweetly pled ;
And gave my best approval and consent
To the betrothals of that happy night.
I knew my father, were he living then,
Would have approved the choice ; and in his place

I formally thus ratified and sealed
The high engagements then concluded on.

Each of my sisters pressed my mother oft
To make abode with her in her new home,
Praising the house and beauty of the scene ;
But all availed not : the good woman thought
There was not such a spot on earth again
As Gowansbrae ; no hills sublime as those
That reared around us their majestic heads ;
No meadows verdant as our own, on which
She watched the harvests ripen half her days ;
No gowans such as greeted there her eye
E'er spread their bosoms to the south wind's breath ;
Nor was there such a pleasant bit of sea
As that which stretched in prospect from our house,
Search the wide kingdom through from shore to shore.
No, no ; she knew their wooers were good men ;
Good men, and kind and thrifty ; still she said,
“They werena Wattys” : she would stay with me.
And so thou shalt, good mother ; thy grey hairs
Shall have a snug retreat and honoured place
Beside my hearth, until thy time is come
(Or mine, it may be) to bid earth good-bye,
And seek the covert where all sleep so sound.

The night before the wedding came a knock,
Hearty and sudden, at our outer door ;

At the brave summons I went out and found
My scarce-known brother Oswald, with a grin
Of rich good-humour wrinkling all his face.
Soon were the nimble sisters at the door,
And weeping on his neck with might and main,
All unlike brides upon their wedding eve.
The gay tarpaulin shook himself at length
From their embraces, and ran, wistful, in,
And took his mother by both hands at once,
And asked if she remembered Osie still ?
She clasped him to her breast, although her joy
Took sorrow's guise, and looked at him through tears.
The sailor kissed them off, and in his own
Bright eye a teardrop glittered. "Mother, oft,"
He said, or rather, half-ashamed, he sobbed,
"When the fierce, deafening hurricanes would sweep
Upon our little bark, I thought of thee.
I saw thee sitting, thinking of thy boy,
And with a prayer ensheltering his head
In the tumultuous weather. Home at last,
Home to his mother comes her wandering son."
With his great hand he gave his eye a brush,
And turning round, as if to change the theme,
He saw old Benjie, who came bustling in,
Delighted with the hubbub of the time.
Glad was the recognition of the two,
And pleasant was our evening round the fire.
Amazed was Oswald (Captain Oswald Bruce

For many years now) at the tale he heard
Of our two marriages a few hours off ;
While in the Captain Benjie's eye espied
A suitable companion, jovial, free,
Rich-freighted with the wonders he had seen
In every nook and corner of the earth ;
And when he took his farewell for the night,
He smilingly expressed a hope that he,
The Captain, would endeavour to heed now
The lessons he had slighted so of yore,
And that he would, as far as in him lay,
Mind "the dispositions" on the coming day.

Two years are gone : a wife is at my side,
A monitor and friend whose love-filled eyes
Are witchery to me, and whose soft words
Break on my ear in silver ; spirit meek,
And beautiful as sunshine when it hangs
Around the young Spring's neck, and kisses all
Her waiting buds to being ; good and fair,
Fair as a rose, and Rosa is her name.
Spirit serene and pure, that thinks no harm,
And loves all gentle things : the sportive lamb
That gambols round its dam ; the humming bee
That, patient, wrestles in the deep flower-bells,
Mindful, even then, of winter ; gladsome birds
That pay their tribute to the summer sun
In sweet songs every day ; gay childhood's smile,

The waving woods, the innocence of flowers
That teach man virtue, but upbraid him not ;
The sunset hour in the transfigured west,
The marching stars, the awe and hush of night.
But the sweet face comes peering o'er my page
And, smiling, pointeth upward, as to say :
“These things, though beautiful, are not the best.
The virtuous wreath wherewith to deck *her* brows,
Must be all fragrant with immortal flowers,
Not hung with beauties of the chilly earth
That droop and perish.” Blessings on the tongue
That sheds the music of sweet, hopeful words
Upon her partner's ear—sweet, hopeful words
To do his duty and be brave of heart ;
To covet nothing but the glad “well done”
Of the great Reckoning-day ; to plant the rose
In life's vast wilderness ; to teach the faith
(The faith our mothers rocked our cradles in)
That God is love, and that He loves poor man—
Poor man, the wanderer ; and that Jesus wept
Beside the grave of Lazarus in love.

So ends my story : many quiet nights
Have brought me leisure for this pleasing task ;
’Tis finished—yet I linger o'er the end
Touched into pensiveness, and hope, and joy :
Here sit I, musing o'er my closing page
And meditate my work, in which I strove

(Arraying Poesy in saintlier robe
Than she is wont to wear as she trips o'er
The pleasant fields of earth) to touch my heart,
And hearts perchance of others, with those things
That still confront us with an earnest face,
And whose solution needs the breath of heaven.
It saddens me to think that men who could
Throw a broad grandeur and rich flush of thought,
The poet's ardour and the poet's grace
On themes the Christian ponders in his heart,
Should touch so sparingly the mighty themes
On which to meditate transfigures life,
And among which all men should teach their thoughts
To wander as at home.

To feel the cheek
Brushed by the zephyr in the heat of noon ;
To see the flowers put on their peaceful robes
And feel their odours flung about your steps
As if they blessed you as you pass them by ;
To hear the ripple of the woodland brook
That strangely babbles, as you list its voice,
Contentment to the heart ; the pleasant earth
That looks up to the sun, and thankful smiles
From quiet valleys which love nestles in,
And where gay childhood gambols ; the soft flush
Of evening as she sobers into night ;
The moonrise, filling with a gentle ray
The sleeping landscape, peaceful as a dream ;

The gleaming of the stars—all this is sweet,
And serves the Poet as his dearest theme.
Yet, half of its enchantment unto me
Derives its being from the joyous thought
That all earth's beauty is the loving gift
Of Him who spread the heavens above my head
And lit the fires of the firmament.
Nature, I love thee, I have blest thy face
And praised thy beauty with no niggard tongue ;
Yet, whether God does love me, never yet
Could nature tell me when she smiled her best.
Ah, what is man to Him—the unknown God,
Far hidden in His own eternity,
Or hymned by concord of immortal lips ?
Ah, what is man to Him—unhappy man
In this small planet of the universe,
His petty joys, his sorrows, and his cares ?
I look up at the heavens, but they are far,
And cold, and silent ; I look all abroad
Upon the earth, but the green earth is dumb
Unto my questioning ; I ask my heart,
My heart can weep, but cannot answer me ;
I search the written Word—the Lamp of earth
Which some would fain extinguish—and get there
This answer as in sunbeams : “ Man is much,
Ah, very much to God, who could not let
Man perish when he had destroyed himself,
But sent in inextinguishable love ”

His reconciling Daysman unto earth
To lay His hand upon His brother-man
And woo him back to God, in which blest work
He ate the bread of sorrow through long years,
Despised or hated by a phrenzied world,
Misunderstood by friend and foe alike,
Until in agony and bloody sweat
He gathered in His undespering heart
The nameless horror of Gethsemane,
And stretched Himself, Heaven's bleeding sacrifice,
Upon the Cross, redeeming with His blood
The fallen sons of Adam, fallen all,
The mightiest and meanest." Thus the Book
Rejected and despised so oft, as was
Its Giver on the earth, alone sheds down
The peace of immortality and love
Upon the unrest of the troubled heart,
And brings us back the too-forgotten faith
Of the eternal unity of men,
Prince, peer, and peasant, in the eye of God,
And in the eye of justice. Thou who read'st
These pages, all now ended, know that all
Upon the earth are brothers, that one blood
Circles in human veins, and that the rags
Which squalor shivers in, bar not the name
Nor break the tie of kindred. Knowing this,
And knowing faith must blossom into deeds,
Be thy hand busy doing Mercy's work ;

Cheering the wretched, soothing the distressed,
Teaching the erring, making all thy life
A parable of goodness ; and thou shalt
Receive thy recompense from God's own hand
At joyous resurrection of the Just.



†

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

CONTINUITY.

OUR lives are formed from silent day to day ;
The Present is the product of the Past ;
And all the moments since the primal ray
Were kinsmen of the moment that was last,
And hewed and shaped the moment ev'n now cast
A wingèd spirit from time's pendulum.
Dread Past ! there is no death for thee ; thou hast
An immortality though all so dumb ;
Thou livest in the *Now* through ages all to come.

For nothing dies, and least of all the Past ;
Unseen it rocked the cradle of To-day,
Time's latest nursling, latest but not last !
To-day unknowing kneads To-morrow's clay ;
To-morrow, its To-morrow ; so alway
The close-linked moments build Eternity ;
And we have each some potency and sway
In fashioning the wondrous Yet-to-be ;
More than an angel's might thy God, O man, gives thee.

NATURE.

How dear is Nature in her garments green !
Is there a soul that all unmoved hath seen
Her beauty and her mystery ? For him
Delightful Nature mantles to the brim
No love-encircled and delicious cup,
Which for her votaries she hoardeth up
In leafy valley or in mountain glen.
How I have longed among the haunts of men
To hear the streamlet's murmur, and to know
The soothingness and rapture that outflow
From the winds' bluster ! O ! thrice-envied lot
To be the dweller in a rural cot
O'erspread by summer's finger to the eaves
With gladsome roses and with freshest leaves ;
To sit and bask me in the sunny beam
As earth were Eden, and all life a dream ;
To hear the tuneful birds around me sing,
Or viewless skylarks on delighted wing ;
To read in every floweret's dewy eye,
As in a text, a message from the sky ;
To yield a willing spirit to the rush
Of many-coloured feelings 'mid the hush
Of moor or upland ; then to hie me home
Blither than bee unto its honeycomb.
How sweet were such a life ! not solely spent
In idle or luxurious content,

But with an earnest purpose oft to wend
And mingle sighs with him that knows no friend ;
To make lone sorrow smile, to teach despair
To turn his groan into believing prayer.
Shall such lot e'er be mine ? How doubly sweet
Were such a life spent in such loved retreat,
To taste life's daily good, and understand
That all is furnished from a Father's hand ;
To feel the breezes scatter health abroad,
The sunshine glowing with the love of God.

TO A MOORLAND FLOWER.

LONE floweret, smiling at my feet,
With countenance so sweet,
Lifting thy chalice to my view,
Bathed in the morn's fresh dew ;
Beholding thee with loving eye,
There come to me, I scarce know why,
A trouble and a sigh.

Belovèd flower, thou knowest not,
Within this peaceful spot,
The canker and the fretful strife
Of man's unquiet life ;
Nor hast thou felt the pain that wrings
The heart tormented by the stings
Of unachievèd things.

No rudest wind that blows can dart
A sorrow to thy heart ;
Thou hast no neighbourhood nor kin
With grief, or care, or sin ;
But here, 'mid Nature's healthful balm,
There gathers on thy face the calm
Of her perpetual psalm.

Though lonely here, I can descry
No sadness in thine eye ;
Alone, but all content to breathe
The freshness of the heath ;
Thy sole companionship I see
The plover and the wandering bee—
Few, but enough for thee.

How sweet it were, thou little flower,
Beloved by sun and shower,
To share the peacefulness that plays
Around thy sunny days !
And sweeter were it to behold
The nurse-like evening come to fold
Thy bosom from the cold.

Lone flower, although thou charm'st me so,
Thy name I do not know ;
I know but this, that at my feet
There smiles a floweret sweet,

Whose lot it is to meekly shine,
Never to sorrow or repine ;
How different is mine !

SABBATH MORNING AT LUSS.

OLD friends of mine, ye silent Bens, I come
Once more to gather health around your feet,
And happy thoughts and unrepenting joys.
Is it a dream that when the primal curse
Smote o'er the earth, it spared this lovely nook,
And Eden in her beauty lingers here ?
Fair Luss, thou sleeping beauty of the hills,
The mountains love thee, and thou lovest them,
And I, too, love thee, garlanded and gay
With roses fair, and fairer innocence.

This Sabbath morning, in thy quiet glen,
For evermore shall summer in my heart.
A day for adoration. The glad sun,
Climbing to noonday, spake this word to me :
“ ‘Twas God that sent me with my lamp to wake
The earth this day to worship ; praise thou God.”
Ben Dhu was as an altar, whence the mist
Uprose like incense with its silent praise ;
The birch-clad river, ceaseless traveller,
Who kissed the moorland floweret on his way,

And leapt down gorges, laughing as he leapt,
Murmured faint praises from his sunken bed ;
The wild flowers told me parables of peace
And calm contentment learned among the hills ;
The bees and humbler kinsfolk on the wing
Were busy at their never-ending hymn.
From Tom-na-glas I looked upon the lake
With all its fairy islands, as they slept
In sunshine and enchantment and delight ;
I gazed in silent rapture till the scene
Grew to a temple, I the worshipper,
With heart defiled, and weary of itself ;
But where the lamb for a burnt-offering ?
This, too, had God provided ; for behold
Caught in the thicket of that love of His,
Immeasureless as vast Eternity,
There stood the mute and meek-eyed Lamb of God,
Mankind's great sacrifice and suretyship.
And as I mused there came this still small voice :
“The Lamb was slain for thee ; rejoice, O man ;
Thou shalt not die in thine iniquity.”

A scene most strange—a splendour and a joy,
A vision holy and astir with God.
I stood adoring, and the breeze did seem
The rustle of God's garment as He passed.

AILSA CRAIG.

LONE Ailsa, crag of mystery and awe,
Come tell me stories of Eternity !
Methinks the Almighty Maker, when He sowed
His universe with worlds, let thee fall,
A tiny seedling from His plenteous lap,
A wonderment for ever in mid-sea.
Tell me thy feeling when thou first didst wake
Into existence, when the morning stars
Shouted their joyaunce in thine infant ear :
Or what thy thought when, on the primal morn,
The sun peer'd o'er the shoulder of the earth
On his first journey, with his robes afame
From the Creator's hand ! Didst thou not think
The rising orb was God, and bowedst thy head
Before the thing of glory as it passed,
And standest as in mute amazement still ?
Dost thou remember when earth's earliest tide
Shuddered its coldness to thy startled heart ?
Dread creature, thou art dumb, or wilt not speak !
Thy thoughts are ever far, primeval, dim.
The creeping centuries are nought to thee,
Or passing dialects of mortal man.
Here stood'st thou when the cherub's guardful sword
Flamed o'er the portal of lost Paradise.
Thou saw'st the darkness of that day of doom,
When the rude soldier pierced the Christ's dear side

Amid the angels' sobbing. The wide gulf
From Marathon to fateful Waterloo
Is unto thee but as a moon's short round,
Or the brief blooming of a summer flower.
Playmate of old Eternity art thou :
Companion of the tempests and the floods
That leap around in thunder. Yet, lone Rock,
A ministry of mercy is thine too :
Some heaths and wild flowers bloom about thy feet ;
Throughout the ages countless myriads
Of longing seabirds hie to thee as home ;
And in these later days, when evening falls,
Thou hold'st thy candle in thy hoary hand
To light the sailor o'er the trackless sea.

NICK O' THE BALLOCH.

THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN PASS IN AYRSHIRE :
LINES SUGGESTED ON A VISIT TO IT.

WHAT hills and vales and torrent scaurs are these ?
These are the Ayrshire Highlands, if you please ;
Those green-clad mountains and those gorges grand ;
Are there much nobler in all Scotia's land ?
Ye hills, I love you, and the darksome glen,
The home and haunt of persecuted men.
Immortal Freedom, daughter of the skies,
With fears and hopes contending in her eyes,

Unpitied fugitive in every weather,
Retreats to the unconquerable heather ;
Where undespairing she will never cease
Her sacred warfare, scorning thought of peace
Until her arm its destined work has done,
And Freedom's battle has been fought and won.
With pride, ye Scotchmen, with just pride look round ;
This is no moorland, this is holy ground !
Behold these mountains, and these mosses mirk,
These were the dauntless Covenanters' kirk !
Here let us worship ; let our souls expand
Within this Temple built by God's own hand ;
Here mingled often with the moorland balm
The holy breath of the ascending psalm !
The sore-spent worshippers found here at length
The Lord of Hosts, their refuge and their strength.
Let's honour men who dared their king withstand,
Those lowly heroes of our native land ;
Let's lend to men who never would be slaves
The lustre of imperishable graves.
These are not Mountains ; they are Altars, these,
Whence ceaseless incense rises on the breeze.

TO-MORROW.

To-MORROW smiles to me in sweet array,
As bright and stainless as untrodden snow ;
But when To-morrow shall be Yesterday,
How foul and trampled shall its whiteness show !

SONNETS : CROSSRAGUEL¹ ABBEY.

I.

CROSSRAGUEL, sitting like a King dethroned,
 His sceptre trailing in the heedless dust,
 His proud arm broken, and his sword all rust,
 Here stand I while the breezes, many-toned,
 Pipe through the roofless walls as if they moaned
 The unregarded story of thy fate ;
 Thy halls, once crowded, now how desolate !
 For centuries wide territories owned
 The magic of thy name, how powerless now !
 The passing peasant, with a careless brow,
 Pays thee no reverence as he trills aloud
 Love-ditties at thy shrine ; lone cloister, thou
 Ne'er thought'st thy day would sink in western cloud :
 Time spared thee long, but brought at length thy shroud.

II.

The passing moments, like to falling leaves,
 Have buried thee from living thoughts of men ;
 Thy belfry silent, ne'er to sound again
 In silver drops of harmony that cleaves
 The happy air in blessing. No heart grieves,
 And none rejoices, o'er thy ruined fane ;
 Eternity hath bound thee with his chain
 Remorseless, silent, while the grass slow weaves

¹ Pronounced Cross-ray'-gle.

Its mantle of forgetfulness for thee.
Men say in other days thy walls did see
Deeds treacherous and vile, and that thy rod
Was red with frequent blood : such well may be.
And yet I deem some saintly souls here trod,
Like meek À Kempis, walking with their God.

III.

Thou and thy doings are all passed away,
And gone to judgment, whether good or ill !
Thou sittest like a ghost, so weird, so still ;
The ghost of thy old self, lone-brooding, grey.
I well remember in my life's young day,
Thy walls seemed to my fancy wrinkled o'er
With spectral legends full of goblin lore,
And things unearthly which young hearts dismay ;
And now, although no idle ghost I fear,
Death, through thy lips, hath counsel for mine ear.
No voice so loud as Death's, altho' it be
He speak but in a whisper ; hark, I hear
His muffled footsteps stealing on to me
Like far-off thunder of Eternity !

IV.

Eternity, the Future's awful name,
Shall gather up each fragment of the Past
Into her bosom, all-embracing, vast,
So that no spark of the heaven-kindled flame

Of human life, no being that could claim
Kindred with spirit, shall be quenched for aye.
And so I deem that there shall come a day
(When Doom's dread fires have repurged the frame
Of this corrupted earth) that I shall meet
The sleeping tenants of this lone retreat.
I count them as my kindred, though the sod
Hath pillow'd them for ages, since their feet
In other years these self-same fields have trod,
And all are kinsmen in the heart of God.

V.

Thus on a bridge of thought I pass to those
Who lived and died long centuries ago ;
I see the Abbot pacing to and fro.
The Abbot is not happy ; and he throws
A troubled look around him, for there goes
The daily tale of that arch-caitiff Knox,
Beneath whose buffets the Church reels and rocks.
“ Let heresy be bridled, else who knows
What it may grow to.” Abbot, 'tis in vain ;
The world is weary of thee and thy chain ;
For men have seen a vision of delight,
Whose cup of joyaunce the wide nations drain,
Rising resistless, like an earthquake's might,
Immortal Freedom, beautiful and bright !

VI.

Why hast thou sunk, Crossraguel, in decay ?
Say, was thy creed a window, through which light
Smote in divineness on the troubled night
Of man's existence, heralding the day,
And shewing to his stumbling feet the way ?
Thy voice, like to a god's, could make men heed,
Could check the cruel and the murderous deed ;
Say, didst thou chide the tyrant's cheek to clay,
And make him tremble at thy word of doom ?
Within thy bosom was there bounteous room
For earth's pale thinkers in doubt's tempest driven,
Hope with her candle smiling in the gloom ?
Didst thou remember unto thee was given
To make this earth a suburb unto Heaven ?

VII.

Old ruin, thou art dead ; why dead so long ?
Wert thou forgetful of thy heavenly birth,
And trailed thy garments thro' the slime of earth ?
Did thy hand take a bribe to wink at wrong ?
Thou wert accounted wise ; thine *arm* was strong ;
Was thy *heart* merciful, forgiving, just,
And meek and saintly, knowing not the lust
Of earth's ambition ? Didst thou loose a throng
To rend and persecute, and call it love
And faithfulness unto the power above ?

Ah ! thou wert proud and cruel in Heaven's sight,
A vengeful eagle, not a peaceful dove,
And so there fell upon thy walls the blight
Of desolation, and of starless night.

ON REVISITING MY NATIVE PLACE.

SCENE of my childhood, once again I stand,
A pilgrim to the old familiar place :
Again I recognise on every hand
The beauty and the mystery and grace
That hang around the sweetness of thy face,
Touching my bosom with a mournful bliss ;
And while the scene all lovingly I trace,
The breeze comes to me with its gladsome kiss,
And whispers in my ear : *No other scene like this !*

Scenes fairer, grander, I have often seen,
But none that so can nestle in my heart ;
A voice comes to me from each meadow green ;
From every bush, from every hedgerow, dart
Old recollections, and dim tears will start
Of sadness sweeter than the loudest joys.
Old times seem of our being to be part,
With all that pleases, nothing that annoys,
The sunny hours of youth, the days when we were boys.

Where now are all my well-remembered friends ?
Where now the playmates of those early days ?
I come expectant ; scarce a hand extends
A greeting to me—scarce a voice that says
A word of welcome ; most upon me gaze
With a cold stranger's eye. Ah ! it is lone
To feel yourself forgotten in those ways
Which in affection you had deemed your own,
To stand in the old streets a stranger and unknown.

So be it. Yet the absence of old friends
The more endears the scene itself to me.
It has not changed ; the same blue sky still bends
Above me its enduring canopy ;
The fields the same, whence larks uprise in glee,
Charming wide heaven in their melodious flight ;
The old stream sings its way across the lea,
Now in the gloom, now dancing in the light,
And the unchanging hills still cheer me with their sight.

The fields where we have wandered in our youth
Become the dreamland of our later years :
Call it not fancy ; 'tis indeed a truth
That falls in dewy blessing 'mong the tears
'Of this our mortal life, that Fate's dread shears
That desolate all else, still leave us *thee*,
Thou Eden of our youth, which ever rears
A paradise of dreams wherein we see
The joys that once were ours but nevermore shall be.

My blessing on those days, those youthful days !
I thank Thee, God, that they can never die.
I thank Thee that around them ever plays
A halo of divineness ; from the sky
Down to the floweret, all that I descrie,
As in bright vision, is transfigured yet ;
Those days that sainted in the memory lie
Untroubled by a pain or a regret,
Whose flowers can never fade, whose suns can never set.

Here, while old feelings gather at my heart,
I muse within our well-remembered Glen.
Thou gentle flow'ret, tell me what thou art ;
Art thou a flower ? or spirit come to men
To charm them back to innocence again
By gazing in the quiet of thine eye ?
Who loves thee should be pure, and hearken when
With silent admonition thou dost try
To chide him from his ill, to woo him to the sky.

Thou simple floweret, with thy dreamlike face,
Thou set'st *me* dreaming, and methinks I see
My boyish days pass by in playful chase
When I, too, was a dweller here, like thee,
My soul exulting in its dower of glee ;
When life was purest pleasure, and the heart
Knew no more sorrow than the bird or bee,
Though forward-looking thoughts even then would dart,
And seeming idle hours strange influence impart.

Ye little flowers, I love you every one ;
Ye bring the breath of unforgotten years :
Ye are ambassadors that swiftly run
To bring the image of your vanished peers
Before my vision ; and my rapt ear hears
Long-silent songsters lift their mellow lays
In sweet groves of the heart ; and all that cheers
The pensive spirit gathers to my gaze,
And earth is warm and bright with suns of other days.

I stand, a stranger, by the door where first
My mother tended me with loving care ;
Doubtless, my mother, thou hadst often nursed
The natural thought that I, low-slumbering there,
If kindly heaven my youthful life should spare,
Would be a stay and comforter to thee
In days of feebleness and hoary hair :
Fond dream ! my mother, it was not to be ;
Too soon the grave did cast its shade 'twixt thee and me.

Embosomed in immortal bliss above,
Dost thou recall our chequered life below ?
Or dost thou intermit Heaven's song of love
At times to come where earthly breezes blow,
And stand beside me when I do not know ?
Ah mother ! lost so long, my heart high beats
At thought of coming days when we shall go
In joy together through the golden streets,
Where God's complacent smile heaven's happiness completes.

Scene of my youth, farewell! farewell the hearth
 Where I was lowly nurtured, where I grew
 In sight of daily virtues which make earth
 Still beautiful to me, and fresh with dew.
 Farewell, dear household friends! so kind, so true,
 That beam upon me from those far-off days.
 Those simple hearts that no ambition knew,
 No touch of envy or of prideful ways,
 The thought of whom brings love that kindles into praise.

THE TOON O' MINNIBOLE.¹

MY blessing on thee, auld Maybole,
 The toon where I was born ;
 Beside the Wee Spout in the Glen
 I passed life's sunny morn :
 The rare auld toon,
 The fair auld toon,
 The toon o' Minnibole.

A tear slid silent doon my cheek
 When I frae thee did part :
 Where'er I gae I carry thee,
 Auld Maybole, in my heart :
 Thou dear auld toon,
 Thou queer auld toon,
 The toon o' Minnibole.

¹The town of Maybole is often colloquially called "Minnibole."

And like the swallow, I hie back
Ilk year to the auld toon ;
Wi' what a joy I see again
The green slopes o' Kildoon,
And wander roun'
The guid auld toon,
The toon o' Minnibole.

Frae Mochrum to the Straiton hills,
The haill expanse seems mine ;
On nae sic bonnie scene as that
The happy sun doth shine ;
Frae Dailly hills
To Patna kilns,
Unmatched auld Minnibole.

Come back, far days, when for the sea
We started fu' o' splore :
How lonesome to me now the hush
Upon Culzean's dear shore,
Where ance we sang,
And lap, and flang,
Nor thocht o' Minnibole.

Crossraguel's haunted wa's wi' dread
Our boyish hearts did fill,

By auld Baltersan for lang hours
We ginned at the Mill,
Then hirpled hame
Barefit and lame,
To scones in Minnibole.

The Auld Green Schule ! where at the ba'
We played till oot o' breath,
And where our wee bit quarrels whiles
We settled up the Peth !
I fear us boys
Had tricks and ploys
Unkenn'd in Minnibole.

The Auld Schule brought us lear eneugh ;
And when we won our prize,
And to the auld folk took it hame,
What joy danced in their eyes !
They thocht, nae doot,
We 'd a' turn oot
Great folks in Minnibole.

But time has swept us far apart ;
Some, posts wi' credit fill,
While some sleep soun' at the Kirkport,
Some at the Clachan hill,
And a' maun gae,
Nae distant day,
Far, far frae Minnibole.

CULZEAN¹ SHORE REVISITED.

MY Past sits here beside me on the sand,
Within its lap the days long gone before ;
It conjures to my sight the youthful band
Of my companions in the days of yore,
With shout and laughter filling all the shore ;
It brings in mournful cadence to my ears
The long-hushed voices of my home once more,
Sad now as dirges of departed years ;
The loving and the loved, although they bring me tears.

Culzean's lone shore ! amid the city's din
How I have longed for quiet of thy face !
Thy hush well taught me solitude is kin
To thoughtfulness, and thoughtfulness to grace.
It taught me, too, to hate things mean and base,
And proud, and cruel, and tyrannical ;
Therefore to me thou art a holy place,
A solace in sad thoughts that come to all ;
A refuge and a shrine to raise me when I fall.

And so at times, as now, my steps I bend
Unto this place of dreams, again to hear
The sea's soft murmur, like the voice of friend ;
To plunge into the waters cool and clear ;
To watch the sea-birds swoop and reappear ;

¹ Pronounced Cullean.

To lie among the bent, in silent mood,
And see with wonder, in my own career,
God, like a reaper, bring me sheaves of good,
With glory flushing now Culzean's deep solitude.

THE BURNS CENTENARY BANQUETS, 1859.

RAB, you're in guid company the night ;
Auld Scotia ne'er saw sic a sight ;
Frae north to south, frae left to right
They're a' forgathered ;
Your hunder years, through dark and bright,
Thou now hast weathered.

Hoot, lad, you flyted sair on Fortune,
That wi' guid chiels she aft was sportin',
Yet aye you'd coggies for the scartin',
Or licked the spurtle ;
And now this night thy muse they're courtin'
Owre wine and turtle.

Fortune, you see, has something mended ;
For wealth she didna care to send it ;
E'en thousands she could weel hae lent it
To sic a debtor ;
To mak' a *name*, fu' weel she kenned it,
You liked *that* better.

'Twas muckle better, Rabbie dear,
The course that Fortune gar'd thee steer ;
Fools may hae thousands in the year
 And unmissed dee ;
We a' had missed a rowth o' cheer
 Withouten thee.

Each Scotsman wears thee in his heart,
Nae crawlin' sycophant thou wert,
Thou playedst nae twa-faced knavish part,
 Aye bauld and sturdy ;
Hadst thou been rich we wadna cared
 Sae muckle for thee.

And yet I dinna mean to vaunt ye,
And were ye livin' you'd no' want me ;
No, Rabbie lad, we winna saunt ye
 This wee while yet ;
An' honest man, wi' faults in plenty,
 That's Robin's fit.

But Robin's faults we winna spier ;
The lad's been dead this sixty year,
And they hae sat on them up there,
 His God and he :
This day he kens them better far
 Than you or me.

Ah, Burns ! thou hadst a vision ance,
Ben in the auld clay biggin's spence,
When Scotia's muse wi' pridefu' glance
Enwreath'd thy brow ;
But thou saw'st naething in thy trance
Like this just now.

Thy country rising in her pride,
And a' her sons, baith far and wide,
Invoking blessings on his head
Wha wrote their sangs ;
Doing their best, though now he's dead,
To richt his wrangs.

Not Scotia alone will raise thee ;
But Johnny Bull will up and phrase thee ;
America and Australasia
They too will meed thee ;
And aiblins ane or twa will praise thee,
Wha couldna read thee.

Auld Scotland's inmost heart is glad
This day a hunder years now fled,
That Robert Burns, her ploughman lad,
Was born in Kyle ;
And grateful she a note hath made
Baith day and style.

Now, Robin, thou hast got a name
Among the starry sons of fame !
To love old Scotland, canty dame,
 Thou wertna slack,
Nor is thy country loath or lame
 To pay thee back.

Thy fields scarce gave thee meat and claes,
Thou wert a puir man a' thy days ;
But stoytin 'mong earth's "banks and braes"
 Thou wert so human
A' feel the glamour of thy ways,
 Baith man and woman.

Hard, hard thy lot, yet proud thine e'e,
And from it could wild lightning flee !
What saut tears moistened it, ah me,
 Nae tongue may tell ;
Let's learn frae thee, and wiser be
 Than thou thyself.

Meantime the earth thy praises fill,
And thou art seated far and still
A king upon Parnassus hill :
 To end this matter,
Thy fame, like Tam o' Shanter's yell,
 'S aye growing better.

DEAR LOVE OF MINE.

DEAR love of mine, I cannot tell
How long I've loved thee, and how well ;
How my heart dances in its gladness,
Anon is touched with love's sweet sadness,
Arraying earth and sky and sea
In beauty that it steals from thee ;
Thee in things beautiful I see,
And all things beautiful in thee !
Thou givest to the rose its spell,
Its beauty to the heather-bell,
And the pale lily's bridal dress
Thou clothest with its loveliness ;
And in the violet dim I trace
The loving meekness of thy face.
There's not a glade where zephyr blows,
There's not a flower that Flora knows,
There's not a green or blooming tree
That is not eloquent of thee.
To me, wherever my abode,
Thine image cometh ; not a road,
Where'er my willing steps may wend,
But I can see for ever bend
Thy gentle face and beaming eye
Between me and the rounded sky.
The rivulet in sportsome game
Soft murmurs, as it runs, thy name ;

And on the gale in wild career,
Or zephyr whispering in mine ear,
I pour a fond love-sigh from me,
And bid them bear it unto thee.
I love thee better, Love of mine,
Than merry lark loves sweet sunshine,
Or than lone Echo loves to sit
And prate to sounds that nourish it,
Or than the breeze in fitful sighs
Delights to kiss the violet's eyes,
Upbreathing fragrance to the skies.
But of thy charms I may not speak ;
Of roses glowing on thy cheek,
Or of the witchery of thine eye,
Whose tender love-light flashes by
Whene'er thine eyelids thou upraisest
And into eyes that love thee gazest ;
Or speak once of thy ruddy lip,
Or words so wistful that there trip ;
For of thy voice I quite despair
To tell the sweetness, or the air
Of tenderness that steals around
The heart that listens to the sound.
Love, better loved than power or fame,
I shall for ever bless thy name ;
Thy life hath taught me how to live,
And heaven, I know, will blessing give ;

The goodness looking from thine eye
Shall teach me how at last to die.
Then blessings on my Love's dear face,
Her worth, her modesty, her grace.

JOY.

JOY, lightest-hearted, come and see
The home I have prepared for thee ;
A sweet home on a gentle mound,
Round which the zephyrs dance with sound
As stilly as the lightsome swing
And fanning of a fairy's wing.
The zephyrs wheel with merry bout
In at the window, and then out,
The fragrance flung around revealing
How that the rogues have just been stealing
Fond kisses from the sweet woodbine,
The wallflower, or the eglantine !
How on the ceasing of each shower
They rifle scents from brier and flower,
Then hie them, laughing, to our room,
And fill it with the rich perfume.

See Rosa wander 'mong her bowers,
Fairer than Flora 'mong her flowers !
Attending breezes gather sweets
That nestle in those still retreats,

And scamper off in eager race
To spill them upon Rosa's face.
O how they love to frisk and dance
Within the light of that fond glance !
With what a frolic wing they dare
To work sweet troubles in her hair !
Of troubles they but little reck,
Tossing the tresses on her neck.
Dear Rosa, wife beyond compare,
So tender, innocent, and fair.

Joy, blithe and nimble, come and be
A guest with Rosa and with me ;
Come, sit beside us at our fire,
And hear her trill our rustic lyre ;
Or hear her read from poet's page,
Young, yet with wisdom of the sage :
A noble thought her cheek will flush,
A pretty thought her tongue will hush ;
She stays to fondle it, and then
She tastes its sweetness o'er again.
A thought of wrong, or mean-souled lie,
Will kindle lightning in her eye !
Hark how she sings throughout the house,
Or trips as quiet as a mouse,
The while the household work goes pat,
As if the fairies helped thereat !
She knows what everything should cost,
She sees that not a crumb is lost,

Well knowing shallow purse hath need
Of good thrift for a generous deed.

O Joy ! what word need I say more ?
We bid thee welcome to our door ;
Be this the dwelling for us three—
For Rosa, and for me and thee.

PRIDE.

WHY should a man be proud ?
What thing so frail as he !
He drew his being from the dust,
And dust again shall be.
Why should a little dust be proud,
Soon to own nothing but its shroud ?

Why should a man be proud ?
What thing so vile as he !
His heart is as a darksome den
Where foul things love to be.
Why should a sinful man be proud,
O'ershadowed by Heaven's thunder-cloud ?

Go, frail and guilty man,
From dreams of greatness cease ;
Kneel 'mong thy sins until thou taste
Humility's sweet peace ;
And Jesus with love's gentle hand
Shall lead thee to the prideless land.

THE MAIDEN'S SORROW.

A MAIDEN sits in her cottage-home,
With all things round her glad ;
Her cheek is fair 'neath her raven hair,
Why then is the maiden sad ?

The clustering roses around her door
Look in with loving eye,
And balm they fling on the breezes' wing ;
Then why doth the maiden sigh ?

That cottage home looks out on the sea,
Where happy sunbeams sleep ;
A sister's care smooths her raven hair,
Why then doth the maiden weep ?

Across her path a shadow doth lie,
A shadow dark and deep ;
At evening's close, like Mary, she goes
To a new-made grave to weep.

The maiden loved ; but her lover had
Stern tryst with Death to keep :
A dead love's smart she wears in her heart ;
Ah ! well may the maiden weep.

ALICE AND ROBIN.

THERE lay a soldier on his weary bed,
Sore wounded and half dead :
A rustic was he, bred unto the plough,
With youth's unwrinkled brow ;
His unenfeebled eye shot in the gloom,
As if it lent a brightness to the room.

It was an hospital in which he lay
Through heavy night and day ;
There lay his soldier comrades all around
Feeble and bandage bound ;
Some sighed, some talked of fields where they had fought,
Some spake of home—and then of *his* he thought.

He thinks of the old home among the hills,
And then his big eye fills
With burning drops which blind him as they fall
Upon the bed's white pall,
But which make dearer to him the old scene
Borne in his heart, wherever he had been.

A moorland homestead with its cozy thatch,
And little garden-patch
Sacred to herbs of culinary kind :
There hang upon his mind
The presence and the hush of lonely hills,
The hush the deeper for the tinkling rills.

He thinks of his old mother in the cot,
 And of her widowed lot ;
He pictures her anticipated joy
 When she should see her boy
Returned in safety from the wars—and then
He glances at his bandages again.

He sees her bending o'er the sacred page
 That makes the simple sage,
Her mute entreaty to the King on high
 Ascendeth on a sigh,
And straightway heaven-breathed confidence and rest
Take sweet possession of the widow's breast.

Then to a neighbour cot his thoughts would roam,
 Unto a maiden's home ;
A maiden with blue eyes and sunny hair
 Above a forehead fair,
Who flitted like a sunbeam 'mong the hills,
With voice as joyous as the singing rills.

A vision of delight was Alice Gray,
 All beauteous as the day ;
Amid life's homely duties her cheek grew
 Unto the peach's hue ;
Graceful, not fragile, was the maiden's form,
Moulded in sunshine, and in rain, and storm.

Fair Alice trothed her plight one far-off day
Unto the youth that lay
Upon that sick and uncomplaining bed,
Sore wounded and half dead.
Ah ! sad it is to think what unknown ills
Were waiting for the maiden of the hills.

A letter came—writ by a stranger's hand ;
Poor Alice dared not stand
To read the tidings of that silent sheet ;
With heart that scarcely beat
She dazedly made out *this* truth alone,
He could not write, his brave right arm was gone.

Upon her cheek the healthful peach swift grew
Unto the lily's hue,
She gasped for breath, she trembled as a leaf
In that great storm of grief.
Well might she tremble in that hour of fate,
Her lover maimed, enfeebled, desolate.

Straightway sped Alice to his mother's cot ;
The mother too had got
The tidings heavy with a thousand fears.
They mingled prayers and tears.
The mother looks at her with questioning eyes,
And Alice, drying up her tears, replies :

“Dear Robin writes me in this letter how
 He frees me from my vow
To marry him : he says he’s maimed for life,
 And could not keep a wife,
And so he cannot ask me for his bride ;
But my heart whispers : Cannot God provide ?”

The proverb sayeth true, “He giveth twice
 Who giveth in a trice” ;
Whether it be of purse he gives a part,
 Or warm love of the heart.
As Alice’s sole wealth in loving lay
She hasted on her charitable way.

How weary was the unfamiliar road
 Unto the drear abode
Where Robin lay, unconscious of the form
 That through the rain and storm
Was hieing to him with its tender love,
Pure as a messenger from realms above.

No sentry ever ventured to gainsay
 The maiden on her way.
From rough men nothing but the kindest word
 The maiden’s quick ear heard.
All paid heart-homage to the gentle face
As if she were the lady of the place.

Within the hospital behold her stand,
Grasping dear Robin's hand ;
Before he could recover from surprise
That filled his wondering eyes,
She kissed him with the warmth of loving lips,
Their honey sweeter than the bee e'er sips.

She flung her arms around the prostrate frame,
Soft-breathing Robin's name ;
He blesses gracious Heaven as he espies
The love-light in her eyes :
Grim-visaged soldiers whisperingly said
It was an angel stood beside the bed.

O day too fleeting, with its wealth of love,
And bliss like that above !
They spake in accents hushed, mysterious, low,
Which only lovers know :
For hours sat Alice, quiet, soothing, bland,
Holding in hers his solitary hand.

But love's keen eye detected greater harm
Than even the ruined arm ;
She marked too well an inward wound that lurked
And secret havoc worked ;
For in his stalwart frame war's hateful knife
Had struck and shattered the deep springs of life.

There Robin lies, and adds unto his store
 Of delicate heart-lore,
That day he finds that a true woman's love,
 Like that of God's above,
Is deep and fixed and centred evermore,
Whate'er misfortunes enter at the door.

As Alice sits there, holding Robin's hand,
 O how could he withstand
The tender-spoken words and the soft touch
 That, silent, said so much !
“And well,” she said, “three hands two mouths can feed ;
With God's good blessing it were no great deed.”

Could they not live 'mong the encircling hills,
 Remote from human ills ?
What ! tear poor Robin from her bleeding heart ?
 The guilty thought depart !
No ; she would work her fingers to the bone
Rather than leave him helpless and alone.

So what could Robin do that wondrous day
 But let her have her way ?
And in due time they wedded and withdrew
 To where scarce any knew ;
And Robin, 'mong the wilds, was blessed to prove
The might, the majesty of woman's love.

Sequestered cottage ! home of peace and love
As of the nested dove :
There Alice toiled on with a sweet content
For Robin frail and bent,
For Robin frail and bent before his time,
As if old age were mingled with his prime.

Think not all glory from the earth hath fled,
That nobleness is dead :
While hearts beat true, and lips fond kisses give,
Heroic deeds shall live :
And thus we find, where'er the broad sun shines,
Earth hath its heroes and its heroines.

LIFE.

My life on earth is but an episode
In my existence ; but a wayside inn
Where I put up and tarry for a night,
As on I journey through Eternity.
And if my heart be wise, it little counts
The richness or the poorness of the fare,
The failure or success, assigned me here,
As these are measured by the common eye.
Success, alas ! brings often pride of heart,
And pride shuts Heaven's inexorable door ;
But meek-eyed failure brings humility,
Upon whose brow Christ's fingers bind for aye

The glory of His own Beatitudes,
Whose precepts yet, like sceptre of a King,
Shall be obeyed from willing shore to shore.
Then let us dare be humble, and aloft
Hold lowness, Christ's banner, to the winds ;
And though our hand be circumscribed in giving,
Just Heaven will judge us, not by what we did,
But what we would have done, had power been given.
Thus seeming failure turns to true success,
And sorrow's fruits, so bitter in their growth,
At last hang sweet upon the tree of life,
Of which men take, and eat, and live for ever.

DE PROFUNDIS.

WHY was I ever unto such life born ?

My God, why is it that I live at all,
To add forlornness to a state forlorn,
And to life's bitterness a deeper gall ?

And what is life ? is it to breathe the air,
To walk the earth, the arching sky o'erhead,
Laboriously to garner up despair,
And add one more to the yet living dead ?

What havoc make we of life's little span,
Ourselves enslaving striving to be free !
God His own image made and called it man ;
What thing that crawleth is so vile as he ?

The toad, detested, crawling from its lair,
To-day is perfect as the first of toads ;
But where to-day man's likeness to the pair
That paced in Eden with the gait of gods ?

Sad is man's story since that day when driven
From Earth's young Paradise ; what heart may tell
O'er man's strange sinning what strange grief in heaven,
Or what yet stranger jubilee in hell !

All are not like ; but most their days pass on
In idle pleasures or too late regret ;
To-day repeats what yesterday has done,
And so each morrow till their sun shall set.

They lay their heads down and sigh out their breath,
And friends weep over the unconscious form :
Who shall dispute the victory with Death,
Or who remonstrate with the noisome worm ?

And when at length the rivulet of Time
Loses itself in the Eternal sea,
And man awakens in the unknown clime,
Who may imagine what that scene shall be ?

“O man,” God says, “I gave thee length of years ;
Of My Eternity I gave threescore ;
What hast thou done with them ? A truce with tears ;
The day of tears and penitence is o'er.

“Shew Me thy deeds. I do not heed thy grief,
Nor the deep pallor that o'erspreads thy brow ;
Thou wouldest be busy since man's life is brief,
And nought so profitless as weeping now.”

Here let me pause and ponder, till my heart
In such communing find immortal food ;
So shall the future play a gracious part,
Casting its shadow on me *now* for good.

MY PAST.

THE past is not a cavern or abyss
Wherein our deeds lie buried out of sight,
No more to be encountered ; it is rather
A sunken Vale unvisited of sun,
Where wander, like pale ghosts, our Yesterdays,
Each with a wallet slung upon its back,
In which are stored the evil deeds of men
That day it left the earth ; companionless
Each walks upon its solitary way,
Although there surge around the dismal host
Of Days departed, multitudinous
As gnats disporting in the sunny beam.
I pity you, ye silent Yesterdays,
Doomed with such burden, and so tottering steps,
To traverse Hades till the judgment-day.
A hateful load ; and yet ye guard it well,

As if ye bore the treasure of a god.
Let me undo the wallet from your back,
And for a moment let me peer within.
But no, I would not ; for my heart well knows
I would see nothing but old sins of mine,
Lead-heavy now, though once they seemed so light.
All sin is death, and yet it cannot die.
How strange this soul of mine ! how mean it is,
And yet how mighty ! My poor paltriest act
Becomes immortal by my doing it.
I can make evil my familiar friend,
Yea, like a god, *create* iniquity,
While yet for goodness feeble as a child.
Sin seems my servant, and I say, "come here,"
And, lo, he cometh with obsequious smile ;
But when I weary of his company,
And bid him "go," he says, my heart's his home,
Like fabled Frankenstein, he will not budge.
Deceitful Vice, how thou ensnarest men !
Betraying all ; and yet they trust thee still !
They sigh to taste the honey of thy lip ;
They know no softness like thy downy cheek,
No sweet enchantment like that breast of thine.
Poor fools and blind ! thus cozened of our souls.
Why should we plant delusive Upas trees
Along our path of life, with shouts of glee,
Yet wonder why their shade brings death and doom ?
How we have stuffed with terrors all our Past !

It is the Sphinx's den, from which she stalks
To daily sit beside the ways of men,
And with conundrums terrify and slay.
No Past, my soul, there is no Past for thee :
The Past is but the Future unarrived,
But speeding on to whelm thee, or to bless.
Look on yon sun, and list his parable ;
Behold him sinking amid western gold,
As bidding earth adieu : he is not dead.
Wait but a little, and the east once more
Shall see his flaming altar, unto which
Rejoicing nations will bring orisons.
How much they teach us, Nature's ministers,
Yet pass us by, unless we seek to learn.

Let me set forth another parable.
The beings which we call Ephemera,
That live but for a day, how *they* misjudge
Of life, and death, and immortality !
They see the sun set, but ne'er see it rise,
And so conclude that it is set for aye
And teach their children so from age to age.
You cannot blame those tiny infidels ;
They buzz their hour away, they know no more ;
The beam they dance in, their eternity !

Are we ourselves not creatures of a day,
And know so little ? 'tis our *dreams* are true ;
For heaven comes nearest to us in our dreams,
Our waking dreams, our silent reveries,

Our expeditions to far lands of thought,
In which our souls dilate and seem to slip
The bounds and moorings of mortality
As heaven and earth were jumbled into one !

I carry to my grave one reverie
Which starts cold drops upon my brow even yet
Methought my spirit, like a flaming sun,
Swept in its orbit through a starless sky
Until its circuit brought it to God's throne,
Whence first it issued on its way to earth.
Before the throne, too, stood my Yesterdays,
Each holding in its hands my secret sins,
Each sin exclaiming from its spectral throat,
“Thou art my father, hide thy face no more,
All earth is here a witness to thy shame.”
I stood and trembled in my dumb amaze,
And looked around, but there was none to help ;
Eternity brought chains to bind me with,
Though then a cobweb could have fettered me.
I knelt for mercy on the floor of heaven
And with wild sobs besieged the feet of God.
An angel with a pitying face and mien
Touched then my hand, and whispered in mine ear :
“Behold, poor penitent, the Friend of man.”
I looked around, and standing by my side
I saw a form like to the Son of God,
With features merciful, but sorrow-marred.
He brushed my tears aside as thus He spake

In accents heard in Galilee of old :
“ He loves my name, this weeping penitent ;
He loveth much, and hath been much forgiven,
Nor needs he other title to the skies.
I saw him yesternight upon his knees
Bewailing bitterly tormenting sins,
Sins long confessed, and therefore long forgiven.
Come, weary one, beside me, else alas !
My life how barren, and my cross how vain.
Take, angel, now those long-accusing sins
And bury them for ever from his sight.”
The pitying angel then advanced and took
Those slimy horrors from the spectres’ hands,
Each thrusting forth its forked envenomed tongue
And glaring with malignant, sleepless eyes.
He held them writhing in his lifted hand,
Then threw them headlong in the burning lake,
And as they hissing fell I saw them sink
Deeper than plummet ever sounded sea.

I woke as from a dream. I thanked my God.
Was it a vision, or a prophecy ?

THE RAINDROP.

I STOOD and mused beside a summer brook,
And watched upon its breast a foam-tipped drop ;
And thus the drop and I held colloquy :

“Farewell,” I said, “thou tiny voyager ;
Thou, too, hadst work appointed unto thee,
And thou hast done it to the utmost jot.
Thy hap it was to fall among the hills,
Or on the moor or plain, and found’st thy way
Through winding veins and crevices of earth,
With juice and plenty blessing as thou couldst.
And now thy task is ended ; but I see
(Like my own heart) that contact with the earth
Has fouled the mirror of thy purity,
Though not for long ; for Ocean’s crystal wave
Shall cleanse thy bosom of its every stain,
Till thou become as hymning angel pure.
Thou peaceful pilgrim, singing to the sea,
I envy thee thy sweet tranquillity :
Unlike to me, no guilty Past hast thou,
No Future with its pitiless assize ;
But in the consciousness of work well done
Thou speedest on to thine Elysium,
Where to the piping of rejoicing winds
Thou shalt disport thee in thy ocean-home,
And help to toss a navy on thy back.
Farewell I bid thee, passing traveller ;
We met a moment, now we part for aye,
And hill and dale shall know thee nevermore.”

Slow-lingering in an eddy of the brook
The raindrop answered, half-upbraidingly :
“Thou errest much. I go away, ‘tis true,

But go away in order to return,
For Ocean is *my* pathway to the plains.
The Sun, ere long, with dalliance and with kiss
Shall waft me to the sky, whence I shall fall
On plain or upland, in refreshing shower,
Again to wrestle through the veins of earth.
Thus have I circled through ten thousand years,
And thus shall circle through ten thousand more,
My foot ne'er weary in its pilgrimage.
Presumptuous though thou deem me, let me speak,
And let a raindrop be thy counsellor :
God's hand hath made us both, appointed us
The limits of our being and our work,
And I have kept my first estate, hast *thou* ?
Thy spirit has a mightier sweep than mine,
Thine eyes can overflow with human tears,
Thy heart with pity, both to me denied ;
But faithfulness to duty is Heaven's test
In whose regard there is no great, no small,
Alike a dewdrop and a continent.
Be not offended though I seem to chide,
I who am little as compared with thee.
I and each atom of the Universe,
Each law and attribute of Nature's frame,
Keep ever busy at our destined task,
No moment's respite either given or sought.
Toil is the lot of all, God's ordinance,
Imposed upon Himself and us alike.

Yea, from the angels' song God turns His ear
To catch the sigh of labour done for Him.
Thou talkest vainly of Elysium !
Go build thy heaven of daily deeds of love
And find Elysium in doing good.
Had not thine eyes been holden, thou hadst marked
(Thy soul all thrilled with rapturous delight)
The stream of being tending to one end,
The consummation of created things,
When God, thy Father, shall be all in all.
How canst thou rest content without some share
In bringing in God's kingdom on the earth,
His throne erected without help from thee ?
Make God Himself thy debtor ; bring to Him
Some souls like jewels to enrich His crown,
Bright jewels gathered from Earth's slime by thee.
Meantime, Earth shivers in her nakedness
And cries to thee for help ; thy mother-earth,
Within whose bosom thy strange being woke
From nothingness to immortality.
She is thy mother ; kiss her tears away !
Her heart is breaking o'er her wayward sons
Who stagger onward, thoughtless, to their doom
God's voice unheeded though He call from heaven
They are thy brothers, thy own kith and kin,
Who have forgotten how divine they are,
And bartered their eternity away
For earth's poor pottage, and the drunkard's song.

They have forgotten, but forget not thou
That once thou wert a reveller thyself
In that far land of God-forgetfulness.
Yea, when adoring at the Saviour's feet,
In love, in wonder, and in ravishment,
Let the Past come and shake its finger at thee,
Thy sin, though pardoned, unforgetable.
Thy place is in the dust, for thou hast sinned,
Yet even the swine-trough of the prodigal
As in his wretchedness he eyes its husks,
Proclaims this truth, like lips of Christ Himself :
Better a sinner than a Pharisee.
Search heaven as with a candle, thou shalt find
No Pharisee in all its golden streets
Flaunting his pride and his phylacteries.
But it is peopled by earth's sinful ones,
Shamefaced and lowly, though forgiven for all.
Think, and be humble, but be helpful too ;
Thou art God's labourer, and He needs thine arm,
Yet stand'st thou idle in the market-place.
Thine idle hours the angels marvel at !
Man's idleness is Satan's masterpiece,
Seeming no sin, yet filling Tophet up !
Be no more idle ; 'tis a God that calls.
Out with thy sickle, for the fields are white,
And glad the heart of the Great Husbandman.
A little labour, then comes Harvest-home,
Thy sheaves bestowed in garner of the skies.

Up and be doing, for it is thy life,
'Tis not too late yet to redeem the time.
Be thou brave knight and hero to thy King,
Forth to His battles and do valiantly.
Why hangs thy sword inglorious by thy side ?
Are there no legionary hosts to quell ?
No foes to lead into captivity ?
Whate'er He bid thee, see thou do it well ;
Where'er He send thee, be thy going prompt,
Nor be a laggard in His messages.
To work is worship ; in His vineyard work,
Not for thy wages at the set of sun,
But for the love of Him who loveth thee.
Thus, child of the Eternal, fully claim
Thy heritage of immortality ;
Like me thou needest an eternity
To live and work in, day and night, for aye."

TWO QUESTIONS.

WHAT is the sweetest of all earthly things ?
Amid the calm which righteous Victory brings,
To hear the song a happy conscience sings.

What is the saddest sight upon the earth ?
To see a spirit, heavenly in its birth,
Quaffing destruction, and it deems it mirth.

ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG FRIEND.

I SAW him dead. I felt his forehead cold,
And sadly looked into the half-closed eyes ;
A cloud of sorrow seemed around us rolled
Hiding all refuge underneath the skies ;
Nor Father's sigh, nor Mother's bitter tear,
Could save their darling from an early bier.

Why on that young face should lie Death's pale hue,
Where should be playing the sweet smile of mirth ?
God must have work for the young soul to do
In other regions than this troubled earth ;
And while *we* see the body and the shroud,
The soul exulteth 'mid hosannas loud.

The hearse we followed down the quaint old street,
Thinking strange thoughts that may not all be told ;
Along our way we half had hoped to meet
The loving Jesus, as in Nain of old,
And see Him stop the bier, the while He cries
In the deaf ear of the young man, "Arise."

We did not see Him, yet was Jesus there,
The Comforter of every weary heart ;
Ye weary ones, send up your silent prayer
That turns to blessedness e'en sorrow's smart ;
How many flowers, immortal in their bloom,
Are gathered in the shadow of the tomb !

Ah ! many joys with that young life are dead ;
A parent's budding hopes, a parent's pride.
We laid him gently in his lowly bed,
We left him sleeping by his brother's side :
Calm be their slumbers underneath the sod
Until awakened by the trump of God.

ON THE SUDDEN DEATH OF A FRIEND.

DEPARTED friend, we bid thee long adieu,
But not for ever—*we* are mortal too ;
Heaven is not distant—but one gasp for breath,
And thou wert hurried, in the arms of Death,
Unto that region where the spirits blest
Toil in God's service, and they deem it rest ;
For, in the service of the world above,
All love is labour, and all labour love ;
“Work while 'tis day,” is still the heavenly call,
And work in one world fits for work in all.
Methinks God's worlds all are interlaced,
And as He needed thee He sent in haste,
Having some purpose elsewhere to fulfil,
For which earth's discipline had taught thee skill ;
And so, I doubt not, thou hast now begun
Another work beneath another sun.
Not vainly God creates brave souls like thee,
Rugged and righteous, who will bow no knee

Save to the Highest, from whose lips ne'er flit
The honeyed nothings of the hypocrite ;
Stern as a prophet, girt about with zeal,
And yet a man who could for others feel ;
Yes, such wert thou—at times misunderstood,
Fearless and honest, dutiful and good.
Yet, standing at thy grave with bow'd head,
We wondered why thy God thus smote thee dead,
Breaking in fragments all thy faithful life,
The hope of children, and the love of wife ;
Yet then, even then, our deepest thought was this :
“ ‘Twas God that did it, can God do amiss ?”
O God of mercy, calm the widow's fears ;
O Man of Sorrows, dry the orphans' tears.

DEATH-BED BREATHINGS.

To sigh upon my bed, with death so near,
How sad it were, if Jesus were not here !

My arm so feeble that was once so strong,
And yet it will be feebler still ere long.

Poor helpless hands, and heavy as the clay,
Ah me, how heavy, yet how worn away !

I cannot stand, but happy thoughts I think ;
And in my weakness I have wine to drink ;

The wine of God's dear promise that He gave
To help the helpless and the lost to save.

My heart beats faintly, and my head doth swim,
My ear is heavy, and my eyes grow dim.

How dark it grows ! Come, Jesus, by me stand,
And in the darkness hold me by the hand.

How sweet to know I have in Thee a Friend
Who will not leave me at my journey's end.

A cross, O Jesus, and a borrowed grave ;
This all Thy portion when Thou cam'st to save.

There was no sorrow like to that of Thine,
Yet all Thy sorrow was for sins of mine.

Almighty Saviour, smitten through with fears ;
O strangest spectacle—a God in tears !

Come, Lord, with blessing ; see me hold out still
Weak, empty hands of prayer for Thee to fill.

Speak, O my Saviour, bid my heart rejoice ;
What music is there like my Saviour's voice ?

The words of Jesus ; hark, I hear Him say :
“Thy night is ending ; now comes heaven's bright day.

"Thou weary one, thy trials all are past ;
Thou long hast waited ; here is heaven at last."

Blest words of Jesus, flashing in the gloom,
And lighting even the journey through the tomb.

Come, great Redeemer, in Thy love come down ;
I love Thee better than heaven's golden crown.

Come in Thy mercy ; let me change ere long
The sigh of sorrow for the angels' song.

Then all my joy to hear Thy voice so sweet,
And all my heaven to worship at Thy feet.

No golden streets my raptured eye shall trace,
Nor jasper walls, for gazing on Thy face.

Weep not for me, ye loving, earthly friends ;
Heaven's joy begins when earth's last sorrow ends.

Behold heaven's feast spread by the loving Lord ;
And I am bidden to the banquet-board.

Weep ye because the captive now goes free ?
Weep rather that ye cannot come with me.

Farewell, ye loved ones ! but I trust ye may
Think sometimes of me when I'm far away.

Life's lamp is burnt to its last flickering breath ;
Come now and finish thy strange work, O Death !

I do not fear thee ; for thy sting's withdrawn,
And death and darkness bring me heaven's sweet dawn.

How dear the thought, as Death beclouds mine eyes,
My death-day on the earth, my birth-day in the skies.

BIGOTRY.

OURS is the road to Heaven, let bigots cry ;
All roads lead heavenward, is my heart's reply.
Dear unto God His pilgrims as they go
Through heat of summer and through winter's snow.
In features diverse, diverse oft in view,
But to *two* points unalterably true ;
One point on earth, the other point above,
The cross of Jesus, and God's throne of love.
Heaven's hero-host, embattled see them stand,
The chivalry of Jesus, sword in hand,
Who bear His banner bravely in the fight,
Yet clothed with meekness fairer than the light.
Thus toil the pilgrims to their rest above,
Their lowliness transfigured into love ;
And love is lowliness in earth and heaven,
Men love the most who have been most forgiven ;

And angels, too, Heaven's vessels humbly bear,
The rapttest seraph is the lowliest there.
Then let us greet each pilgrim with God-speed,
Nor scorn a brother for whom Christ did bleed,
And who would bleed, too, for his Saviour's name,
And welcome pain and penury and shame ;
And though at times a tear his eye may dim
He falters not, for little unto him
The roughness or the steepness of the road
If it but lead him to the throne of God.
He seeks the kingdom that afar doth shine,
Although he travel by a way not mine ;
Forgiven and ransomed he shall reach its shore
And get Heaven's welcome, and shall we get more ?
Then let us feel earth's greatest heresy
Is lack of love and Heaven's sweet charity.

SELF-REMONSTRANCE.

WHAT tender-mercy Heaven unto me shows,
And yet my heart is all unhappy still ;
In vain God with unstinted hand bestows,
The heart how little, yet how hard to fill !

My restless heart, for ever seeking bliss,
Of each poor pleasure clamorous for a part,
Thou seekest happiness, forgetting this,
God has no blessing for the selfish heart.

Seek not for Peace, all bootless is the quest ;
What right hast thou for happiness to seek ?
How often hast thou cheered the weary breast,
Or wiped the tear from misery's lone cheek ?

O, how canst thou be happy ? dost thou know
How many wretched round about thee live ?
Dar'st thou be happy in the sight of woe ?
What cheer hast thou to the forlorn to give ?

Seek thou to make earth better ; learn to sigh
O'er others' sorrow and thine own shall cease ;
The sorrow-cloud shall melt from out thy sky,
The noisy tempest rock itself to peace.

My heart, be wiser, let thy striving be
Not to be happy but be doing good ;
So shall there come a blessing unto thee,
And God shall feed thee with the angels' food.

HOPE.

How strange is Hope—still couching 'mong our sorrows,
Gilding To-day with light from our To-morrows ;
And though oft shining with delusive glow,
Our hopes like roses blighted as they blow,
Still comes the new and undespairing Morrow
To whisper Hope into the ear of sorrow.

SPRING.

HEED not, O Spring, though cold winds blow,
Come with thy gentle charms ;
Thou nursling of the storm and snow,
Wake from old Winter's arms.

Thus thought I 'mid the young year's showers,
When, lo ! thy breath forth sped
And whispered to the buds and flowers :
"Rise from your graves, ye dead."

I saw thee with young eager face
Rise as from troubled rest ;
I saw thee with thy cold hand place
A snowdrop on thy breast.

I saw thee on a later day
Within a meadow stand ;
While thou didst weave a chaplet gay
Of daisies in thy hand.

I heard the birds by wood and stream
Around me carol loud,
And larks, as in celestial dream,
Fling music from the cloud.

I felt a joy surpassing mirth,
And as I looked there ran
New life throughout the veins of earth
And in the heart of man.

Each day thy cheek became, methought,
More beautiful to see,
And every night in secret wrought
A greener robe for thee.

Thy cheek all wet with April showers,
And love-light in thine eye,
I saw thee smile among thy flowers,
And into Summer die.

SUMMER.

BLITHE Summer, tripping o'er the lea,
And with thy cheeks aglow,
I warmed my heart with thought of thee
Amid the Winter's snow.

And now thou comest, young and fair,
The golden hours to bring ;
How rich thou art ! for thou art heir
To all the wealth of Spring.

Blest wand'rer, lavishing thy wealth
On wood and plain and shore,
Where'er thou roamest breathing health
In every open door.

O Summer bright, how beautiful
The freshness of thy leaves,
The splendour of thy days, the cool
Of thy delicious eves !

I bless thee for thy climbing suns
That build earth's leafy bowers,
I bless thee for the breeze that runs
To bring me breath of flowers.

And all things love thee, season gay :
The lamb upon the lea,
The bird upon the bending spray,
And childhood in its glee.

Thou bringest to the youth love's dream,
And to the maid fond sighs ;
The rapture of young hearts, the gleam
In love-awakened eyes.

Age brings no shadow to thy face,
Thou diest in thy charms,
And lay'st thy treasure and thy grace
In ruddy Autumn's arms.

AUTUMN.

ALL sunbrowned and begirt with peace,
Bland Autumn, thou art here ;
Thou givest meaning to the months,
Thou crownest all the year.

For thee bleak Winter howls his storms,
Spring greeneth on the lea,
And Summer smiles—the seasons thus
Find perfectness in thee.

A wheaten chaplet, ripe and gay,
Thou wearest on thy head ;
Thou singest through the fields, thy cheeks,
As thine own apples, red.

How thou rejoicest in the laugh
Of reapers 'mong the corn !
Thou fillest the green lap of earth
With plenty from thy horn.

Thy cunning hand hangs juicy fruits
On bush and bending tree ;
O joy, to gather clustered nuts
In the wild woods with thee !

I bless thee as all men must bless ;
Yet, Autumn, when I hark,
I miss from out thy shining skies
The singing of the lark.

On all the little tuneful throats
Strange silencing hath come,
As if, like man, they sang in *hope*,
And, their hopes crowned, are dumb.

To me, when fades thy cheek, thou art
As Summer's glory dear,
Nor vainly russet woods put on
Their monitory sear.

Thy work all done, thou lay'st thee down
Resignedly to die,
And earth grows desolate again
With Winter in the sky.

WINTER.

HAIL, monarch of the dying year,
Hail to thy rugged brow!
Thy breath hath swept the forest bare,
No flatterer art thou.

Yet kindly dost thou eye our mirth
Around the blazing fire ;
What glee as on we heap the coal
Or pile the log yet higher !

Gay laughter dances in our eyes
As jest and song go round ;
What care we though thou stand'st without
With icicles all crowned !

How beautiful to watch thy snows
Fall in fantastic forms !

How terrible to hear thee rock
The cradle of the storms !

Thy frost with biting tooth comes forth
From his unknown retreat,
And, lo, the shining wave becomes
A highway for our feet !

Even when thou bind'st with icy chains,
Sweet mercy warms thy breast ;
With what a mother's voice thou say'st,
“Take now, O earth, thy rest.”

And earth sleeps soundly in thy lap,
Though winds blow keen and wild,
And with thy swaddling-band of snow
Thou wrapp'st her like a child.

But soon she shall awake refreshed,
And birds begin to sing ;
And thou shalt lead, with willing hand,
The young year to the Spring.

NIGHT.

How beautiful the falling night
While dim stars build her crown !
The young moon hastes her lamp to light
And sends her greeting down.

Night comes with cooling dews again,
Although no eye can mark ;
She heedeth not the praise of men,
She blesseth in the dark.

She brings the boon of peace to all,
The bird unto its nest,
The lowing herd unto the stall,
And man unto his rest.

The day's vain tumult she doth calm,
She bids the floweret close,
On weary eyes she sheds the balm
Of merciful repose.

How sweet, while all in silence lies
And happy dreams have birth,
To see fond night, with starry eyes,
Watch o'er the sleeping earth !

HOLIDAY.

I LONG for Nature's dear delights,
To muse by mountain rills,
And gather tranquil thoughts that grow
In silence of the hills.

I long to hear, round dewy flowers,
The humming of the bees,
And taste, on seldom-trodden ways,
The freshness of the breeze.

A pang-like feeling in my heart
Throbs for a glimpse of sea,
And to behold in quiet nooks
The blossom on the tree.

I long to hear the thrush's note
Bid evening woods rejoice ;
I long for it as lover longs
For his beloved's voice.

Thus sighed I 'mid the city's din ;
But soon came happy days,
When sweet peace met me as a friend,
On solitary ways.

I trod the healthful upland heights,
I drank the mountain rill,
I felt what joy grows wild, amid
The heather of the hill.

I brushed through tangle of the glen,
And startled the wild bee ;
I breasted, with a high delight,
The billows of the sea.

The breezes took my heart's dull cares,
And scattered them in play ;
The mountains looked on them, and lo !
They fled, ashamed, away !

The silence where pure thoughts are born,
From which each vile thing flees,
The solitude that dumbly broods,
They awed me to my knees !

Mysterious feeling ! snatching me
From weariness and care,
Lifting my spirit to the height
Of a diviner air.

A feeling mighty, although vague,
Of subtle power and scope ;
A rapture and a recompense,
A memory, a hope !

THE FISHERMAN'S WIFE.

Ah me, the wild, the weary nicht,
I canna sleep nor rest ;
I wonder how my bairn can lie
And slumber on my breast.

I canna calm me doon to pray,
My child I scarce can kiss.
O God, my Donald on the sea
On sic a nicht as this !

How terrible to sit alane
And hear the billows dash !
To watch the lightning while the storm
Half drowns the thunder-crash !

Wae's me ! the wild winds how they rave !
The wild waves how they flee !
On sic a nicht his boat is but
A cockle on the sea.

But now there is a blessed lull—
Perhaps the storm is o'er ;
Thank Heaven—but no, it bursts again—
And wilder than before.

His arms are weary at the oar,
And I nae help can bring ;
Ah, Donald, I can only weep
And helpless hands here wring.

Thou smilest, bairnie, while I weep ;
What means thy childish mirth ?
Thou smilest, though perchance thou art
An orphan on the earth.

Sweet Mercy, is that Donald's voice
Abune the tempest's roar ?
His trusty boat, I make her out,
He heads her for the shore.

A crowd is gathered on the quay ;
They answer him fu' glad ;
They sent up mickle prayer the day
For my puir fisher lad.

Again he calls wi' cheery voice—
That call he means for me.
O God ! 'tis Thou, 'tis Thou hast saved
My Donald frae the sea.

Smile on, my bairnie ; each loud blast
Brought terror unto me,
But thou wert wiser ; for kind Heaven
Revealed it unto thee.

HYMN—BELIEVER TO JESUS.

JESUS, man's Almighty Friend,
At Thy mercy-seat I bend ;
Thou hast taught my soul to flee
In its darkness unto Thee,
Refuge of the heart forlorn,
Comforter of those who mourn !

Human weakness Thou dost know,
Human weariness and woe ;
For of old Thou took'st Thy seat,
Weary with the noonday heat,
On the well's refreshing brink
Asking of the woman drink.

Lord, Thy life yet wafts to me
Balm from fields of Galilee !
How Thy promises of rest
Still the throbings of my breast !
And no day to me so bright
As Gethsemane's lone night.

Son of God, from Heaven come down,
Son of Man, with sorrow's crown,
Buffeted 'midst laughter rude
Of the mocking multitude,
On Thy back the cruel gash
As it quivers with the lash.

When I see Thy cross of woe
And Thy wounds for me that flow,
When I mark Thy latest breath,
And Thy cheek all pale in death,
When I think such lot was Thine
What are deepest woes of mine ?

How my burden lighter grows
In the shadow of Thy woes !
To Thy Cross I lift mine eyes,
In my heart new hopes arise,
And my sorrows seem to be
Buried in the grave with Thee.

HYMN—JESUS TO BELIEVER.

COME, thou soul perplexed and sad,
Come, and let me make thee glad ;
Tell thy sorrows unto Me,
And thy sorrows all shall flee ;
Pain and sadness, well I know,
Are man's heritage below.

Come, thou weary one, and say,
Art thou weary with the way ?
Art thou saddened with the strife
And the bitterness of life ?
Let me Heaven's sweet grace impart
To the Marah of thy heart.

Is thy burden hard to bear ?
In thy burden let Me share !
Thou forgettest, soul forlorn,
That a cross I, too, have borne :
Long ago I carried Mine,
Let Me help to carry thine.

In thy trials look above,
And remember “God is love” :
When the darkness clouds thy sight,
Still remember “God is light” :
On the cross thy sins I bore ;
Come and weep vain tears no more !

Look, and to thy wondering eyes
Glories manifold shall rise ;
For thy weary brow behold . . .
In My hand a crown of gold ;
Rivers of delight here glide,
Thou shalt taste them at My side.

THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR.

I SEE the Saviour from the Supper rise
And leave the Upper Room ;
His steps tend slowly to that place of sighs,
The Garden with its gloom :
Ah, what a cup is mingled for Him now,
What tenfold horror settles on His brow !

Exulting Hell is gathered to the sight,
Heaven, too, in dumb amaze ;
Engulphed in darkness deeper than the night,
The prostrate Saviour prays :
How dark His soul ! but darkness is not doubt,
Nor in the tempest will Heaven's lamps go out.

Created 'mid Hosannas of the skies,
Earth is *redeemed* in night ;
In Jesu's agony and wrestling cries
Behold earth's saddest sight .
Heart death-dejected, eyes bewept and dim,
Haste, mighty angel, haste to strengthen Him.

The Holy One—great bearer of our name—
Accepts from God the cup ;
That dreaded cup of human sin and shame,
Christ's lips will drink it up !
O ransomed Earth ! rejoice while ages run,
For dark Gethsemane is Heaven begun.

Come now, O Judas, with thine armèd men,
And with thy treacherous kiss !
Behold those sad-upbraiding eyes again,
Then sink in the abyss :
The hour is come ; the fated band appears,
And the pale moonlight glitters on their spears.

See ! they reel back at sight of that strange face
So worn, so sorrow-marred,
So noble, with a more than mortal grace,
Yet as with thunder scarred !
Why comes this band with its insulting spear ?
'Tis Jesus, not Barabbas, that is here.

But now He lets them wreak on Him their will ;
They bind those wasted hands ;
Relentless malice now may drink its fill ;
Unmurmuring He stands :
He stands alone, the meek, the pure, the good,
Fronting the menace of the multitude.

Not fronting it with hate's indignant frown,
Nor with pride's cold disdain,
But as the King of Sorrow with His crown
Of weariness and pain :
There in the moonlight manacled He stands,
His state laid by, the sceptre from His hands.

On that mild face the cruel buffets fall ;
They blindfold those sad eyes ;
They hurry Him from mocking hall to hall
Amid insensate cries.
Son of the Highest, full of heaven's own grace,
They spit their venom on Thy tear-stained face.

Hail, greater Monarch with Thy crown of thorns
Than proudest king that day !
'Mid execrations and a thousand scorns
They lead the Christ away :
At Pilate's bidding, as if Hell did urge,
See those bare shoulders quiver with the scourge !

He bows defenceless in a storm like this,
Yet silent through it all !
The Rulers quaff their cup of vengeful bliss,
Soon to be turned to gall :
No more they need the multitude to urge,
To Calvary the heedless thousands surge.

On Calvary, thrice-holy ground for aye,
The fatal cross is raised ;
Behold the Godlike bleed His life away !
The mid-day sun, amazed,
Forgets its shining, and untimely night
Wraps with its mantle the too-hideous sight.

He blesses others even when hanging there
In life's expiring throes ;
Hark ! through the darkness there ascends a prayer
For mercy on His foes :
Resistless Magnet ! drawing all above ;
Divine Compassion and diviner Love.

Heaven's bleeding Victim ! He has travelled far,
 But now the end is here ;
The Prince of Peace dies 'mid the clang of war,
 The soldier and his spear.
O Love Eternal ! Thou for us hast trod
The awful winepress of the wrath of God.

BETHANY.

BLEST Bethany, to me wreathed round
 With flowers that wither not,
Thou art no ruin, as men say,
 Thou art a holy spot ;
Thou gavest Jesus, love-bespread,
A place where He might lay His head.

The outcast Jesus finds in thee
 At least *one* open door
Where welcome waits Him, ere He face
 The city's mad uproar,
Where round Him, desolate, shall swell
Earth's fury, and the surge of Hell.

Blest home, where He forgot alike
 The malice of the proud
And the short-lived and treacherous
 Hosannas of the crowd,
And the loved three by friendship drew
To higher heights than friendship knew.

Home, ever fragrant with the breath
Of Mary's spikenard sweet ;
I see her, with a gentle hand,
Anointing Jesus' feet ;
And with devotion's raptured air
She wipes them with her flowing hair.

For Jesus had brought back from death
The brother of her love,
And often had entranced her ear
With tidings from above,
While Heaven's strange accents on His voice
Made her heart tremble and rejoice.

And Lazarus, the loved, I see
Sit in the hallowed room,
And men gaze on him as to read
The secrets of the tomb ;
I see, too, busy Martha stand
With ministry of heart and hand.

Blest three, who *last* showed Jesus love,
Love that was half despair ;
They saw men hate Him, yet for men
He agonised in prayer,
Until, in ecstasy of grace,
All Heaven seemed gathered in His face.

O Bethany ! to Jesus dear,
 Whence He was loth to part,
 Methinks of all the earth thou wert
 The nearest to His heart ;
 And, as into the Heavens He passed,
 His fond eye rested on thee last.

SORROW.

O SORROW ! all men vainly flee
 The swoop of thy dread wing ;
 What home may shut its door on thee ?
 What heart dost thou not wring ?

Thou mark'st the lonely watcher's fears
 Beside the weary bed,
 Thou hear'st the drip of falling tears
 On pale face of the dead.

At cottage door, at stately hall,
 The silent mourners stand ;
 Thou standest too—a funeral pall
 Thou holdest in thy hand.

They wend unto the churchyard mound,
 Their loved one down they lay ;
 They hearken to the strange, weird sound
 Of falling clay on clay.

What burning tears that blind the eyes
Fall on the churchyard sod !
What sobs of prayer that seem to rise
Unanswered unto God !

Slow to their home sad steps they trace,
Their dear one no more there ;
Thou, too, return'st, and tak'st thy place
Within the vacant chair.

They look at each familiar thing
That speaks to them of *him* ;
Each common sight and sound will bring
Tears desolate and dim.

And o'er that home for days, for years,
Thy darkening shadow flits ;
Yet on the gleam of gathering tears,
Hope, the bright angel, sits.

And God still comforts those who mourn ;
For Sorrow is divine,
And Jesus in their need will turn
Earth's water into wine.

PRAYER.

O PEACE ! where may'st thou build thy nest
Amid earth's sin and care ?
Where but within the lowly breast,
Hushed in the calm of prayer ?

Man of his greatness is bereft,
Much is he doomed to bear ;
But pitying heaven to him hath left
The miracle of prayer.

Unto his wrestling, God doth send
Forgiveness for offence ;
Unto his weakness, God doth lend
His own omnipotence.

When evil days their sorrows bring,
O man, then upward look ;
To slay them, Prayer shall be thy sling
And stone out of the brook.

Heed not too much earth's change or loss,
A brighter day will shine :
As Simon helped with Christ's own cross,
So Christ will help with thine.

He walks with thee life's weary road ;
And though thy friends be few, . . .
O man, remember it is God
With whom thou hast to do.

But hopes and promises like these
To Prayer alone are given ;
We cannot climb save on our knees
The steep path unto heaven.

Prayer is our refuge and our strength
Amid life's blinding showers,
And like an angel plants at length
Earth's desert sand with flowers.

HEAVEN.

THE gorgeous sunsets that have birth
Are but transfigured mists of Earth ;
The rose that sheds its fragrance round
Distils it from the darksome ground ;
So Heaven, that captivates our eyes,
Is built out of our tears and sighs.

Though tears that blind us seem so frail,
With God they wrestle and prevail ;

Though heavy-laden be our sighs,
The faintest climb unto the skies,
And Heaven, the beautiful, the glad,
Its gate opes widest to the sad.

Fair Heaven, our treasure-house art thou ;
Earth's jewels glitter on thy brow ;
Thou keepest for us, in God's love,
Our lost ones, drawing us above—
The father who did guide our way,
The mother on whose breast we lay.

And thus it comes, life's daily smart
Is building Heaven within our heart ;
The cross we bear through pain and strife
Slow blooms into the tree of life;
And Jesus, to our wondering eyes,
Shall read Earth's riddles in the skies.

There, knowledge is at length complete,
Adoring at the Saviour's feet ;
There, rapture kindles in each eye,
The deeper as the years roll by ;
For Heaven seems ever but begun,
While the eternal ages run.

TO MY WIFE IN HEAVEN.

THY hand, my Jeanie, moulders now in clay,
 That grasped mine fondly on our wedding day ;
 Those lips I kissed with such a pure delight
 Lie cold and silent in the grave to-night,
 While I sit lonely by my burnt-out fire,
 And weep o'er joys that did with thee expire.

No more *thou* wepest, unless Heaven have tears ;
 Enough the sorrows of our mortal years !
 We stood together in the tempest's roar,
 And in life's battle were both smitten sore ;
 But thou wert bravest, and didst hide thy sighs,
 And kissed the tears that gathered in mine eyes.

God turned our trials into peaceful hours,
 When thou wert happy 'mong thy garden flowers ;
 How dear to thee the quiet country air !
 'The hills of Overtoun to thee how fair !
 Ah me ! that walk in dull November weather,
 We little thought it our last walk together.

How patient wert thou, through thy weeks of pain,
 When Hope stood weeping, and our prayers seemed vain !
 And when Death's message reached thee from thy Lord,
 "Home, home to Jesus," was thine only word :
 Without a sigh, without one parting quiver,
 Thy spirit passed into the heavens for ever.

Thou art not dead ! for love can never die ;
I yet shall meet Heaven's welcome in thine eye ;
Thy words shall fall in music on mine ears,
Touched with the accent of diviner spheres,
And Jesus' self shall teach our feet to stray
Through the green pastures of eternal day.





